How is Reading in the Content Areas Taught in Rural Schools?

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ABSTRACT

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Research (Clary, 1974; Hodges, 1982; O’Brien & Stewart, 1990; O’Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995) has established that educators often fail to incorporate reading into the content areas. This becomes a problem for those students who struggle in the area of reading. The study will be conducted through a phenomenological case study approach with the purpose of understanding the essence of why teachers incorporate or fail to incorporate reading into content areas. The goal is to examine perceptions of educators and the mechanism through which they incorporate reading into the content areas. The researcher will distribute surveys and participate in semi-structured in-depth interviews, complemented with classroom visits. A purposeful sampling of three teachers will be chosen from the secondary grades. The results of this study can be used to enhance literacy activities across the curriculum, which could lead to changes in statewide mandated testing.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .......................................................................................................................... 3

Acknowledgments ......................................................................................................... 4

List of Tables ................................................................................................................. 15

Chapter 1: Introduction .............................................................................................. 16

  Purpose of Study ........................................................................................................ 19

  Research Questions .................................................................................................. 22

  Significance of the Study ......................................................................................... 23

  Design of Study ........................................................................................................ 23

  Methodology ............................................................................................................ 24

  Data Presentation and Analysis .............................................................................. 25

  Site Selection .......................................................................................................... 25

  Limitations of the Study ......................................................................................... 26

  Overview of Dissertation ....................................................................................... 26

Chapter 2: Literature Review ..................................................................................... 28

  Defining Literacy ..................................................................................................... 28

    Social Factors ......................................................................................................... 29

    Political Factors ..................................................................................................... 30

  Measuring Literacy .................................................................................................. 31

  Differences Among Secondary, Remedial Reading, and Elementary Reading Programs ............................................................................................................ 33
Secondary Reading Programs ....................................................... 33
Remedial Reading ......................................................................... 38
Elementary Reading Programs ..................................................... 39
Content Literacy ................................................................................ 40
Defining Content Literacy ......................................................... 40
Need for Content Literacy in Today’s School .............................. 42
Content Literacy Programs .......................................................... 44
How Content Literacy Helps Students Learning/Achievement........ 45
Content Literacy for Diverse Students........................................... 46
  Learning-Disabled Students ....................................................... 46
  Second Language Learners ....................................................... 47
  Deaf Students ............................................................................ 48
History of Teaching Reading in Content Areas ............................ 48
Political Factors ............................................................................ 51
Trends and Issues in Content Literacy Instruction ......................... 56
  Constructivist Learning ........................................................ 56
  Integrated Studies.................................................................... 57
  Interdisciplinary Instruction .................................................... 58
  Collaborative Learning ........................................................ 58
  Project-Based Learning ......................................................... 58
  Experiential Learning ............................................................ 60
Structured Journal Writing ............................................................ 61
Perceptions of Content Literacy Among Teachers and Schools.............. 62
Resistance to Content-Area Literacy .............................................. 62
Responsibility for Content-Area Reading ...................................... 67
Strategies to Teach Content Literacy .............................................. 70
Content Literacy Continuum ....................................................... 70
Modeling ....................................................................................... 71
Good Relationships With Students ............................................... 73
Formative Assessment .................................................................. 81
Determining Most Important Ideas and Themes ............................ 88
Asking Questions .......................................................................... 89
Creating Visual and Other Sensory Images From Text ................... 90
Drawing Inferences ....................................................................... 91
Retelling or Synthesizing What’s Read ........................................ 92
Utilizing Fix-Up Strategies ........................................................... 93
Impact of NCLB or Standardized Testing on Classroom Instruction..... 95
What Does Teaching to the Test Mean? ....................................... 95
What’s Wrong With Teaching to the Test? .................................... 96
How Does the Public Feel About Standardized Testing? ............... 97
What Do Critics Say About Standardized Testing? ....................... 97
Nurturing Lifelong Learning ........................................................ 99
Teachers’ Awareness of Pedagogical Knowledge and Philosophical Orientations ................................................................. 101

Chapter 3: Qualitative Methodology and Research Design ......................... 104

Focus of the Study ................................................................................. 104

Phenomenological Perspective .............................................................. 104

Case Study Design ................................................................................. 105

Site Selection ........................................................................................... 106

Gaining Access and Selecting Participants ............................................. 107

Data Collection ....................................................................................... 108

Interviews ............................................................................................... 108

Classroom Observations ........................................................................ 111

Data Analysis .......................................................................................... 112

Limitations .............................................................................................. 114

Validity ...................................................................................................... 114

Subjectivity ............................................................................................... 116

Conclusion .............................................................................................. 117

Chapter 4: Analysis of Data ................................................................................ 118

Introduction ............................................................................................. 118

Case Studies of Three Teachers .............................................................. 118

Kelli: A Teacher of Mathematics .......................................................... 119

Rose: A Teacher of Science ................................................................. 124
Appendix S: Participant Consent Form .............................................................. 273
Appendix T: Interview Questions ....................................................................... 274
Appendix U: Thank You Letters with Follow-Up Questions ............................. 279
  Kelli ......................................................................................................... 279
  Rose ......................................................................................................... 280
  Rose’s Response ........................................................................... 281
  John ......................................................................................................... 282
Appendix V: Observations Schedule ................................................................. 283
Appendix W: Thank You Notes to Participants ................................................. 287
  Kelli ......................................................................................................... 287
  Rose ......................................................................................................... 288
  John ......................................................................................................... 289
Appendix X: Clarifications of Observation Checklist ......................................... 290
Appendix Y: Content Area Reading Observation Checklists ............................. 295
  Kelli ......................................................................................................... 295
    March–May 2006 ........................................................................ 295
    May 2006 .................................................................................... 299
  Rose ......................................................................................................... 303
    February–March 2006 ................................................................. 303
    May 2006 .................................................................................... 307
  John ......................................................................................................... 311
February–March 2006................................................................. 311

May 2006 .................................................................................... 315
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Teacher Attitude Survey Responses ................................................................. 148
Table 2: Content-Area Reading Observation Findings by Teacher................................. 157
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Tyler was a ninth-grade student struggling in all academic areas. He was reading on a third-grade level. As far back as he could remember he had struggled with reading. (His dad also had struggled in reading and was diagnosed as dyslexic when he was in school). As Tyler tried to answer comprehension questions in science, he struggled with the reading passages. When Tyler told his teacher he needed more time, she said she could not wait and went on to the next lesson. Every time his teacher called on someone to read, Tyler tried not to establish eye contact. He knew the book was far above his reading level. He wished his teacher had other books in her classroom like his teachers had in elementary school. He could read and understand those books better. No matter how hard Tyler tried, he could not seem to keep up with his classmates. He could tell that fellow students and teachers were tired of his needing more time for assignments and his stumbling over unknown words as he was reading. He knew they were losing patience with him. How could he blame them? He was losing patience with himself.

When Tyler turned 16, he got a job at McDonald’s. He had finally found something he was good at. He had always helped his dad do the cooking at home. He enjoyed coming to work each day. He finally came to realize that school was just not for him anymore, and he quit just as his dad had done in high school. He took a full-time position working at McDonald’s and is still there today, making hamburgers for minimum wage.
As shown in the fictional story above, any reading assignment is difficult and frustrating for students who struggle and lack reading skills. This story illustrates one child’s struggle with reading and the challenges he encountered on a daily basis in the absence of a teacher who incorporated reading strategies into content-area instruction. Tyler’s story is not new; he is one of many children who fail to complete high school because of the daily obstacles they encounter when they try to keep up in reading. Many of these students drop out to take jobs in the low-paying service sector.

One might be tempted to conclude that secondary teachers are callous in the face of such needs, but most have not had any training in how to teach reading in the content areas. When content-area teachers incorporate reading strategies into their classes, they help students gain the information they need to complete content assignments. Therefore, reading in the content areas focuses more on comprehension.

Teaching reading is more geared toward the use of phonics and sounding out words. Because direct reading typically does not continue as students move to higher grades and instruction concentrates on specific academic subjects, low-functioning readers and those with learning disabilities may need additional reading supports (McCombs, Kirby, Barney, Darilek, & Magee, 2005). What is known is that by the middle grades, the majority of students may appear skillful in the mechanics of reading, but aren’t strategic enough in their ability to explore and interpret meaning. They often just go through the motions of reading and writing, saying the words or putting the words on paper (Vacca, 2002). Literacy programs are usually limited to specialized courses for
low-achieving students. After seventh grade, few schools provide comprehensive literacy programs for the majority of students who have learned to decode words easily and who read smoothly in elementary school (Vacca, 2002).

Students may need not only basic reading skills but also instruction in strategies that will help them to better understand and think critically about the text they encounter in their daily classes. The intensity and delivery of interventions must be monitored and adjusted depending on students’ needs and response to instruction (Bryant, 2003). This type of approach may have helped the student in the opening scenario.

There are many reasons why reading is difficult to infuse into the secondary school curriculum. Experts cite "occupational selection, preservice indoctrination, ego defensiveness, curricular traditions, and professional training among others" (Hill, as cited in Hargrove, 1973, p. 23). Schubert (1971), Madden (2000), and Bradberry (2003) also mention time as a factor affecting teachers’ ability to incorporate reading into lessons in the content areas. Teachers may claim that they are not reading teachers, and it is not their job to teach reading (Alnassar, 2000; Bradberry, 2003; Hollingsworth & Teel, 1991; O’Brien & Stewart, 1990; Wilson, 1995). Finally, content literacy is difficult to infuse into the secondary school curriculum because teachers have not been prepared by their training programs to do so (O’Brien & Stewart, 1990).
Purpose of Study

What do Americans think is the most pressing social issue affecting our children’s future? According to a recent survey by the financial services firm TD Waterhouse, illiteracy ranks number one, followed by health care and the environment (“Illiteracy Threatens,” 2004). The survey of 1,022 Americans found that 51% of the population consider reading to be the most important skill in a child’s development, more than listening (30%), speaking (12%), and writing (4%). President George W. Bush has called illiteracy “a national emergency” (Seligman, 2000, p. 1). Madeline M. Kunin, deputy secretary of education in charge of research, argues, “We cannot be competitive as a nation or improve our standard of living unless we are able to improve the literacy rate” (“The Broken Dream,” 1993, p. 4).

Despite past and ongoing efforts, illiteracy in this country continues to rise (Lustig, 2002). According to “The State of Literacy in America,” released by the National Institute for Literacy, over 90 million U.S. adults—nearly one out of two—are functionally illiterate or near illiterate, without the minimum skills required in a modern society (Roberts, 1998). There is a 38% illiteracy rate for adults in the United States (Literacy.org, as cited in Sanborn, 2004). The 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy report estimated that 30 million adults in the United States function at the “below basic” level of literacy skill and 11 million adults are in the “nonliterate in English” level (ProLiteracy, n.d., p. 3). In a study conducted by the Educational Testing
Service, America ranked 10th out of 17 industrialized countries in adult literacy levels (Bernstein, 2002).

American industry pays a high price for the extent of illiteracy, especially in its ability to compete globally (Lustig, 2002). Its adults suffer, too, even in basic everyday requirements. Out of 191 million adults in the U.S., as many as 44 million cannot read a newspaper or fill out a job application (Roberts, 1998). About 44 million American adults read at level 1, the lowest reading level, indicating that they lack the ability to read a food label or a simple story to a child (ProLiteracy, n.d.). Another 50 million more cannot read or comprehend above the eighth-grade level (Roberts, 1998). According to education experts, it requires ninth-grade competence to understand the instructions for an antidote on a bottle of corrosive kitchen lye, 10th-grade competence to understand the instructions on a federal income tax return, and 12th-grade competence to read a life insurance form (Roberts, 1998).

The federal government has launched several initiatives to combat the problem of illiteracy, most notably the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and the Reading for Excellence Program (Walker, 2005). These initiatives aim to teach every child to read by the end of the third grade, expand the number of what the government considers high-quality family literacy programs, and provide early intervention for children who are at risk of being misidentified for special education. Walker (2005) adds that Reading for Excellence and Leave No Child Behind initiatives show overall improvement in early reading, with 9-year-olds who participate achieving the best scores in reading since 1971.
Still, today’s youth continue to struggle with reading (Bernstein, 2002). Americans ages 16 to 25 not only underperform their foreign counterparts, but underperform to a greater degree than do Americans over age 40 (Bernstein, 2002). Although 2003 marked the 20\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of \textit{A Nation at Risk}—the report that shocked Americans with its negative depiction of the country’s school system—there has regrettably been little improvement in that period. Reading proficiency among 17-year-olds actually dropped between 1990 and 1999, while their performance in math and science remained nearly stable. More than 3 out of 10 students drop out of public high school (Dobbs, 2003).

One strategy for working with struggling readers is to teach reading in content areas—in other words, to incorporate reading into instruction in social studies, science, mathematics, and other subjects. Despite its promise, few teachers of academic content seldom use this instructional practice in their classrooms (Hodges, 1982), and many studies show that teachers have negative views about or misunderstand what is involved in teaching reading in content areas (e.g., Alvermann & Moore, 1991; Clary, 1974; Dupuis, 1984; Hodges, 1982; Lutz, 1987; O’Brien & Stewart, 1990; O’Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995; Ratekin, Simpson, Alvermann, & Dishner, 1985; Simonson, 1995; Vacca & Vacca, 1989).

Teaching reading in content areas can have an impact beyond increasing reading skills. According to Author (2002), many high-stakes tests, like those required by NCLB, are reading tests rather than tests of specific knowledge. It is important that teachers
recognize that their students’ reading abilities may play a significant role in their performance on these tests (Hall, 2005). Using a functional approach, the content area teacher can best facilitate reading in authentic learning situations (Forget, 2004).

This study will add to the literature because it investigates the practice of teaching reading in content areas among rural teachers. This is significant because most previous research has investigated content-area reading in urban or suburban schools. More than 58 million Americans, or 20% of the U.S. population, lives in rural areas (MSN Encarta, 2003). Of the entire U.S. population, 5% are illiterate (MSN Encarta, 2003). Assuming this percentage applies evenly throughout all population demographics, one can extrapolate that nearly 3 million rural-dwelling are illiterate. Because illiteracy is such a prevalent problem, more research needs to be conducted in rural areas (Altieri, 1997).

**Research Questions**

This study is guided by one broad research question: What is the experience of rural high-school teachers who report that they do teach reading in their content areas? Subsumed under this broad question are the following, more specific questions:

1. What reasons, attitudes, and beliefs exist in rural high-school teachers incorporating reading into their content area classroom?
2. What strategies occur in a rural high-school teacher’s content-area classroom and what is their frequency of use?
3. What role does literacy play in high-school teachers’ classrooms?
4. Who do rural high-school teachers believe should be responsible for reading? What influences a teacher’s decision to implement literacy practices in their classroom?

5. What methods do rural high-school teachers use in their classrooms?

**Significance of the Study**

Although nearly two-thirds of the 15,600 public school districts in the United States are in rural areas, most research focuses on urban or suburban districts. Nevertheless, one-third of all teachers works in rural schools and would benefit from knowledge about effective practices in rural schools.

The focus of this study is on understanding the lived experiences of 3 teachers in a rural high school who report that they have taught reading in their content areas. By understanding themes that emerge from the study of these teachers’ experiences, the researcher hopes to discover relevant patterns and share these findings with other educators. This research adds to the literature because it increases our understanding of how reading is taught in the content areas in a rural school.

**Design of Study**

To find out more about teachers’ lived experiences, the researcher will conduct a phenomenological case study to demonstrate what it was like to teach reading in content areas through the eyes of 3 teachers in a rural high school. Data will be collected
primarily through interviews and observations. Through purposeful sampling, the researcher will choose 3 teachers to share how reading is taught in their content areas.

**Methodology**

The researcher will gain permission from her superintendent and high school principals to conduct the study. Prior to this she will gain IRB approval. The researcher will then distribute surveys to find teachers who teach reading in the content areas. Names will be drawn through random sampling of teachers who are willing to be observed and interviewed. They will be given a calendar of classroom visitations.

After gaining informed consent, the researcher will conduct three interviews with each of the teachers she will observe. The interviews will be typed and debriefing notes will be taken. Emerging key phrases and statements that speak directly to the phenomenon in question will be examined. The researcher will interpret the meanings of these phrases to see what they reveal about how teachers teach reading in the content areas. Next, the information will be organized into meaningful clusters to identify emerging themes. After data is analyzed it will be represented in a chart. The researcher also will write observations. Finally, thank-you notes will be written to participants and the principal for allowing the researcher to conduct her study at their school.
Data Presentation and Analysis

The researcher will read the transcripts of interviews with the teachers in the study in their entirety several times to get a sense of the whole before breaking the information into themes. Initial codes will be noted in the margins and the themes will be written out on index cards grouped accordingly. The themes will be used to develop case studies for each of the 3 teachers. Then the researcher will read over the information from each of the case studies to determine the similarities and differences that existed among the 3 teachers. These experiences and comments will be organized into charts to help the researcher draw conclusions from her findings. Finally, a long paragraph will be written providing a narrative description of what the interviewee experienced to develop the essential structure of her own experiences.

Site Selection

The site was selected as a matter of convenience. The researcher is a full-time teacher, and she is unable to leave her job in order to conduct research at a school other than the one where she is employed. Although conducting a case study in her place of employment will pose some challenges and introduces some threats to the study’s validity, it also will provide some benefits. For example, because the researcher has taught in the school system (at a different building than the participants) for 11 years, she is acquainted with the participants. Although the researcher did not know the participants
personally, the participants will feel more comfortable with her than a stranger, and therefore they may not be as reluctant to allow her to interview and observe them.

Even though the site has unique characteristics, it also shares characteristics with other rural schools. For example, like many other rural schools, the school used in the study serves a low-income community with a large concentration of low-wage jobs, high unemployment, few educational resources, and low levels of education among residents (see, e.g., Roscigno & Crowley, 2001).

**Limitations of the Study**

A limitation of the study will be that the researcher will not be able to engage in persistent observation for an extended time in the field, due to working as a full-time teacher. Although the researcher teaches in the same school district and has some capital, she will have to establish trust and learn the culture of the school. This will be done through the interviews she conducts and the rapport she will establish with teachers in the field through the 3-month observation period. The researcher does not teach directly with these teachers because she is an elementary teacher and in a separate building from the high-school teachers to be studied.

**Overview of Dissertation**

Chapter 2 will share what research has said about content literacy instruction. The researcher will share background information on literacy and content literacy to prepare
readers. The researcher will give a brief overview on literature on the past, present, and future of content literacy. Along with this overview, trends and perceptions on content literacy will be shared as well as strategies used to teach content literacy. Finally, the impact of NCLB or standardized tests on classroom instruction will be discussed.

Chapter 3 explains the use of qualitative methodology as the framework for the study. To help understand the lived experiences of rural high-school teachers incorporating reading in content areas, the researcher will undertake a phenomenological case study. Data will be collected through surveys and interviews as well as follow-up classroom observations. The researcher will read the interview transcripts and observation notes in their entirety several times to get a sense of the whole before engaging in systematic analysis to identify emergent themes. She will develop initial codes by using the themes that emerge from transcripts. She will discriminate the data and make reflections about it.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Literacy

The problem of defining literacy has puzzled the public since the early 1940s (Roberts, 1995, p. 412). On the surface, there doesn’t seem like there is a problem with the definition of literacy: “‘literacy’ is the ability to read and write” (Roberts, 1995, p. 413). On the other hand, “[t]o define literacy as ‘the ability to read and write’ is not a thorough statement. Many questions remain unanswered about what someone reads and how much” (Roberts, 1995, p. 413). Literacy is “a way of thinking and a purposeful activity” (Langer, as cited in Roberts, 1995, p. 426).

Despite changes in the definition of literacy over the past fifty years, experts still do not agree on its meaning (Roberts, 1995). Many researchers claim that there is no real way to define literacy. Numerous researchers have noted that the term has varied meanings (see, for example, Freire & Macedo, 1987; Gee, 1992; Guralnik, 1980; Walter, 1999) and that there is no one way of being literate (Langer, as cited in Myers, 1992; Meek, 1991). Strictly speaking, for these thinkers, there is no such thing as a definition of literacy, only definitions of this literacy or that literacy. Even if we could decide on a common definition of literacy, to be considered literate by some does not necessarily mean that other groups will consider that same person literate, or that they will remain literate (Shannon & Crawford, as cited in Roberts, 1995). Theorists argue that information about literacy is historically situated and socially formed (see, for example,
Literacy is defined by the dominant social group in a given culture, which makes an unbiased definition impossible. Furthermore, the dominant group’s definition of literacy changes, perpetuating gaps between the dominant group and other, less dominant groups (Walter, 1999).

Many scholars (Bruner, as cited in Myers, 1992; Edelsky, as cited in Myers, 1992; Erickson, as cited in Myers, 1992; Heath, as cited in Myers, 1992; Langer, as cited in Myers, 1992; Lipson & Wixson, as cited in Myers, 1992; Robinson, as cited in Myers, 1992; Wixson & Peters, as cited in Myers, 1992) define literacy as socially constructed practices, each having the correct skills. Literacy is meaningful within a social context (Blumer, as cited in Myers, 1992); literacy is a social process that defines the character and value of literate actions (Green, as cited in Myers, 1992, p. 302).

Piaget explained that different points of view develop an atmosphere in which conflict and change happen (as cited in Cannella & Viruru, 1995, p. 213). According to Vygotsky (as cited in Cannella & Viruru, 1995), “[k]nowledge appears as collaboration between two individuals and evolves into individual understanding. With cooperative learning children can solve problems” (p. 213). Cognitive development is dependent on the child’s social environment (Piaget, as cited in Cannella & Viruru, 1995; Rogoff, as

As sociocognitive learning is examined, questions emerge about the content to be learned (Canella & Viruru, 1995). “Doise (as cited in Cannella & Viruru, 1995) has argued that the social regulations that are inherent within previous content experiences impact or ‘socially mark’ learning of additional content within social interaction” (p. 214). Content could affect interaction (DeVries & Kohlberg, as cited in Cannella & Viruru, 1995, p. 214). Various forms of content may differ in the amount and type of social interaction necessary for concept construction (Cannella & Viruru, 1995). Various forms of knowledge may disagree to the amount of social incorporation (p. 219). Literacy may require a more knowledgeable partner. Content for interaction may affect collaboration. One should not assume all social interactions will develop the same outcomes with all content. Observations and comparisons are required (p. 219, p. 220)

**Political Factors**

The struggle over definitions of literacy is political as well (Roberts, 1995). Politicians have much to gain in eliminating illiteracy (Roberts, 1995, p. 412). The possibility of manipulating statistics increases and there is less reliable information when there are various definitions of literacy (Roberts, 1995, p. 412). Some try to dominate others (Roberts, 1995, p. 413). Arguments over definition pertain to whose politics of
literacy will win (Wickert, as cited in Roberts, 1995, p. 413). Hot-button issues related to literacy include a) the elimination of bilingual programs; b) guidelines for state, district, school, and classroom literacy instruction; c) state-and district-required assessments; and d) unequal access to technology for literacy learning and teaching (Willis & Harris, 2000). History tends to repeat itself but viewpoints remain the same (Willis & Harris, 2000, p. 86–87.)

Literacy has become a national issue (Davenport & Jones, 2005, p. 1). In his State of the Union message for 1997, President Bill Clinton advocated the America Reads Initiative, which championed national standards and assessment in all subjects and sought federal assistance for literacy efforts. This was the first attempt to enact federal legislation aimed at literacy for children (Davenport & Jones, 2005). In the 2000 presidential campaign, George W. Bush regularly spoke of his record on literacy and he and his wife Laura, spoke of reading as “the new civil right.” The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2002, which federalizes literacy policy in important ways, has been argued in state legislatures, Congress, and federal courts.

**Measuring Literacy**

Theorists, program planners, and practitioners have developed three major approaches over the past half-century to address these questions: quantitative, qualitative, and pluralist (Roberts, 1995). Quantitative approaches attempt to establish a benchmark to identify an exact point at which a person is deemed literate so that literacy rates or
levels can be readily observed and recorded. Quantitative definitions are both
sociographical and historical. A person may or may not be considered illiterate from one
moment to the next (Roberts, 1995, pp. 424–425). Quantitative approaches can cause
shifts of literacy as long as these fall within the range of measurement.

Qualitative approaches describe the features or dimensions of literacy or the
literate person more generally by focusing on characteristics associated with being
literate. This is frustrating to those who like things to be measurable. Standardized tests
can no longer be easily charted for comparisons with others (Roberts, 1995, p. 419).

Pluralist approaches to defining literacy have developed multiple modes of
literacy (Roberts, 1995, p. 420). This approach shows literacy as changing not only in
time but also in context (Roberts, 1995, p. 424). One thing that can be agreed upon is that
students in today’s schools have higher expectations placed on them in the area of
literacy. In the 21st century, students and workers are expected to obtain the ability to use
“digital technology, communications tools, and/or networks to access information in
order to function in society” (International ICT Literacy Panel (2002), as cited in
enGauge 21st Century Skills, 2003, p. 3). This form of literacy encompasses not only
“basic literacy” but also scientific, economic, technological, visual, information, and
multicultural literacies (enGauge 21st Century Skills, 2003, p. 4.).
Differences Among Secondary, Remedial Reading, and Elementary Reading Programs

Secondary Reading Programs

There is a crisis in literacy with adolescents: More than 8 million students in grades 4 to 12 are struggling readers (Grigg, Daane, Jin, & Campbell, as cited in Sternberg, Kaplan, & Borck, 2007, p. 416). According to the 2004 and 2005 results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress reading exam, adolescent readers make up a part of the struggling students in today’s schools (Hall, 2006, p. 424). Those struggling students are at high risk for dropping out or doing poorly in content area classes (Sternberg, as cited in Kapplan & Borck, p. 416).

Difficulties with literacy affect student achievement across the board. State and national exams show K-12 students struggling as students continue through from grade to grade (Donlevy, 2007, p. 2). Hirsch (2006) points out that students perform worse when compared internationally as they continue through school (p. 1) Hirsch (2006) claims that this achievement gap is more evident and adolescent literacy is important in changing the trends in achievement.

Adolescents often are expected to read textbooks to learn specific content in their math, science, and social studies classes (Bulgren & Scanlon, as cited in Hall, 2006, p. 424. These readers may appear helpless or avoid reading (Johnston & Winograd, as cited in Hall, 2006; Brozo, as cited in Hall, 2006) or abandon reading (Vacca, 2002). Yet content-area teachers may ignore the needs of struggling readers and not instruct their
students in reading (Hall, 2005). Since reading instruction typically does not continue into the higher grades, low-performing readers and students with learning disabilities may need extra support in reading (McCombs, Kirby, Barney, Darilek, & Magee, 2005).

Students should learn reading in the primary grades and continue to build on those skills throughout their school years (Hock & Deshler, 2003, p. 27). Just because students can read doesn’t mean they don’t need any more guidance in reading as they progress through school (Berman & Biancarosa, as cited in Donlevy, 2007, p. 2).

The majority of students in the middle grades may seem knowledgeable in the mechanics of reading, but don’t use strategies to explore and interpret meaning (Vacca, 2002). Older students need guidance to go from fluent decoders into strategic readers (Robb, as cited in Vacca, 2002). Many researchers claim that when students are taught strategies that help them process the text, they learn more content (e.g., Fielding & Pearson, as cited in Frey, 2006; Flood, Lapp, & Fisher, as cited in Frey, 2006; Paris, Wasik, & Turner, as cited in Frey, 2006). Unfortunately few high schools have reading programs that teach students these skills and strategies (Hock & Deshler, 2003, p. 29). Although individual teachers may incorporate content literacy practices into their subject matter instruction, literacy programs are usually limited to specialized courses for low-achieving students (Vacca, 2002).

Policymakers are beginning to see that early reading programs are not enough (Vacca, 2002, p. 7). The RAND Reading Study Group concluded in a report prepared for the U.S. Office of Educational Research and Improvement,
A child who successfully develops beginning reading skills may not automatically become a skilled reader. Large numbers of children who have successfully acquired beginning reading skills later fall behind in their ability to deal with school reading tasks — a phenomenon that experienced teachers call the “4th grade slump.” … The recent federal investment through the [Reading Excellence Act] and its successor programs, Reading First and Early Reading First (totaling more than $5 billion over the next five years), will be lost unless the knowledge base on reading comprehension is further developed (Snow as cited in Vacca, 2002, p. 7).

**Secondary Students’ Unique Needs in Terms of Literacy**

*Beyond the basics.* For many years, researchers believed that struggling secondary students required help with basic reading skills, vocabulary and comprehension skills, and writing abilities (see, for example, Bryant, 2003). Research suggests that focusing just on basic skills can cause some secondary students to be mislabeled (NCTE, 2004, p. 3). Instead of help with phonics or decoding, adolescent readers need more reading experience spread over a wider variety of texts, as well as discussion that provokes critical thinking and examination of those texts (NCTE, 2004).

*Writing instruction.* Educators and policymakers also are urging the need for effective writing instruction in middle and high schools (Manzo, 2006, p. 5). While 43% of observed classroom activity was spent on paper-and-pencil tasks, little composition in writing was expected (Applebee, as cited in Knotts, 2001). While efforts have been made to improve writing development, little research on secondary writing development is available to suggest improvements to be made. Most research is based on early writing as
opposed to secondary writing (Gundlach, 1982; Sulzby, as cited in Knott, 2001). A report by the Alliance for Excellent Education (as cited in Manzo, 2006), a Washington-based organization that promotes high school improvements, outlines 11 components of writing instruction that have been shown to be effective in rigorous research studies. These include 1) writing strategies, 2) summarization, 3) collaborative writing, 4) specific product goals, 5) word processing, 6) sentence combining, 7) prewriting, 8) inquiry activities, 9) process writing approach, 10) study of models, and 11) writing for content learning.

Higher-order thinking skills. Higher-level thinking includes such skills as a) explanation of criteria, b) analysis of a text, c) defense of a judgment, d) critical thinking, and e) problem-solving (Knott, 2001). Secondary students demonstrated basic literacy development on multiple-choice questions and interpretations of select passages but had trouble when higher-order thinking skills were required. This and earlier studies (Applebee, 1984; Dearman & Plisko, 1981; Frederiksen & Dominic, 1981; Whiteman, 1981) share the importance of encouraging writing development in secondary schools to develop students’ interpretive skills and to allow students to express ideas fluently.

Shared, dynamic learning. Combining reading and writing instruction to further higher-order thinking demands requires student experiences that are dynamic, interactive, and purposeful (Knott, 2001). This is seen as the development of literacy in which interaction is taking place as learning is developing. Instructional activities would then be cognitive and social (Rogoff & Gardner, as cited in Knott, 2001). Therefore, adolescents
need literacy tasks that are constructive. But improving instruction in adolescent literacy is not about writing or reading more or changing instructional strategies. The change must also include a framework that guides the development of a new direction of how literacy should be delivered (Knott, 2001).

**Possible Solutions to Adolescent Literacy Problems**

As more teachers of adolescents incorporate several different research-based strategies, better results hopefully will be found for students to develop essential literacy skills (Donlevy, 2007). Schools should share practices that are working with schools across the country; these practices should be described in detail for other schools to model (Hock & Deshler, 2003, p. 34). Demonstration sites could be established to showcase the programs and practices that produce outcomes for adolescents who have problems with literacy. These places can be examples to those who want to incorporate successful practices (Hock & Deshler, 2003).

Professional development is most important (Frey, 2006b). More than twenty years of research shows professional development raising student achievement in schools (Joyce & Showers, as cited in Frey, 2006b). School and district initiatives claim a commitment to professional development to promote new instructional repertoires. Professional development programs should teach administrators and teachers how to incorporate scientifically based practices (Hock & Deshler, 2003). Resources should be
focused on professional development programs that prepare teachers to use practices that have been proven and shown to be successful (Hock & Deshler, 2003).

**Remedial Reading**

Between 25% and 60% of students will have trouble reading at some time in their schooling (Scheffel, Shroyer, & Strongin, as cited in Gale, 2005). Moyer (1982) proposes that traditional approaches may not be of main importance to the normal child or the child with reading problems.

While some Chapter I programs, resource rooms, remedial reading programs, and adult literacy programs are successful, many are not effective and may even be counterproductive (Milligan, 1993). School-based treatments have not been shown to be effective (Kennedy, Birman, & Demalone, 1986; Moody, Vaughn, Hughes, & Fischer 2000; Puma, Karweit, Price, Ricciuti, Thompson, & Vaden-Kiernan, 1997; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, as cited in Blachman et al., 2004). The problem with implementing research is that standard instruction must be changed so that learning can take place (Blachman et al., 2004, p. 458).

Keys to effective remedial reading programs are early, intensive intervention to help students close the gap with their higher-ability peers (Archer, as cited in Gale, 2005; Gale, 2005; Torgeson et al., as cited in Blachman et al., 2004; Vandasy, Jenkins, & Pool, as cited in Gale, 2005); constant monitoring of students’ progress (Chard & Osborn, as cited in Gale, 2005; Madden & Slavin, as cited in Gelzheiser & Meyers, 1991; Peterson
& VanDerWege, 2002); repetition (Moyer, 1982); and practice (Gale, 2005; Gaskins, as cited in Gale, 2005). Individualized Prescribed Instruction offers a multilevel instructional approach (Schiavone, 2001). Other effective strategies are described by Vaughn, Gerston, and Chard (as cited in Graham, Pegg, & Alder, 2007) and Swanson and Hoskyn (as cited in Graham et al., 2007).

**Elementary Reading Programs**

The relationship between the abilities children enter school with and their later schooling are congruent: the lower the skills, the greater the likelihood of later school difficulties (Baydar, Brooks-Gunn, & Furstenberg, as cited in Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Juel, as cited in Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Stevenson & Newman, as cited in Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Tramontana, Hooper, & Selzer, as cited in Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Children from low-income families are most at risk of reading difficulties (Dubow & Ippolito, as cited in Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Juel, Griffith, & Gough, as cited in Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Smith & Dixon, 1995) for a variety of social differences (Adams, as cited in Boulware-Gooden, Carreker, Thornhill, & Joshi, 2007; Anderson & Stokes, as cited in Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Feitelson & Goldstein, as cited in Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Heath, as cited in Myers, 1992; McCormick & Mason, as cited in Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Ninio, as cited in Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Raz & Bryant, as cited in Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Teale, as cited in Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).
Research over the last twenty years has shown that children need to learn phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, print awareness, phonics, and fluency, which enable children to decode unknown words and are the basics of prerequisites needed for reading (Boulware-Gooden et al., 2007). However, Boulware-Gooden, Carreker, Thornhill, and Joshi (2007) explain that learning to decode is a means to an end—that end being able to read and understand written communication created by others and to write to be able to communicate. Therefore, reading instruction does not end with decoding. Students need to be taught to understand what it is they are reading. A number of studies and initiatives outline successful strategies, such as fluency instruction (Texas Reading Initiative, 2002) and comprehension (Pressley, Wharton-McDonald, Mistretta-Hampston, & Echevarria, as cited in Boulware-Gooden, et al., 2007). Other comprehensive reading instruction programs are described by the Ohio Literacy Initiative (1999) and the National Reading Panel (2000).

**Content Literacy**

**Defining Content Literacy**

Like the term *literacy*, *content literacy* has various definitions. McKenna and Robinson (1991) define content literacy as being able to use reading and writing to learn new information in content areas (p. 30) that includes three cognitive components: general literacy skills, content literacy skills, and background knowledge. Content literacy represents skills needed to gain knowledge of content—the terms are not the
same and content literacy is not a prerequisite for content knowledge. On the other hand, content knowledge is a prerequisite of content literacy. The more background information one has the more leads to the integration of more knowledge (McKenna & Robinson, 1991).

Content-area literacy has evolved over the years (Moss, 2005). Today teachers are focusing on the importance of encouraging content-area literacy instruction in the early years:

[Content area literacy begins the moment a child uses reading to learn or to enjoy or to inquire. As soon as kids are learning to read they are reading to learn; they are reading to enjoy, to inquire….What motivates kids to want to learn to read is that they are learning from what they read or they are enjoying what they read. The emphasis is on the uses of reading which begin very early in one’s development, using reading for lots of purposes—that’s where content literacy begins (Vacca, as cited in Moss, 2005, p. 57).

Even the terminology associated with content literacy is changing. The terms **content-area reading** and **reading to learn** have been changed to content-area literacy, which has referred to reading and writing to learn (McKenna & Robinson, as cited in Moss, 2005). More recently, experts have broadened the definition to incorporate technology and other text types (Moss, 2005). Content-area literacy has come to refer to all the literacies in students’ lives—whether in school or out of school—and the myriad forms that today’s texts can take, whether textbook or trade book, e-mail, electronic messaging, or Internet sites. Students must be able to decide whether the wealth of
information that can be downloaded or locate in libraries is purposeful. The issue is how students are able to handle multiple texts (Bean, 2001-2002, p. 2). Teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels must realize their importance (Swafford & Kallus, 2002).

**Need for Content Literacy in Today’s School**

Teachers cannot assume that once students have learned to read they already have the skills and position needed for reading to learn (McQuagge, 1974). It was thought that once students were able to read, skills, development, and practice would follow with use, and elementary reading skills should be enough. Expanded reading and writing instruction acknowledges that literacy growth is incessant and does not cease at the end of fourth or sixth grade (Ruddell, 2001). Indeed, reading instruction should continue as students enter middle and high school (Leinski, Wham, & Johns, as cited in Alanssar, 2000). As students advance through the grades, reading tasks become more complex (Gall, Gall, Jacobsen, & Bullock, 1990). As students come in contact with difficult texts and higher work loads, they need higher level reading skills to be able to develop comprehension (Alnassar, 2000; Herber, 1978). It is becoming known that reading instruction must continue throughout a student’s schooling (Stanchfield, as cited in O’Connor, 1986, p. 2).

Several studies have found that teachers confuse reading-to-learn with learning-to-read (Herber, 1978; Nelson & Herber, 1982; Readence, Bean, & Baldwin, 1989; Roe,
Stoodt, & Burns, as cited in O’Brien & Stewart, 1990; Singer & Donlan, 1989; Vacca & Vacca, 1989). As students advance to middle school, instruction shifts from an emphasis on learning how to read and to using reading to learn content-area subject matter (Bryant, Ugel, Thompson, & Hamff, 1999). Barton (1997) discusses how reading used to be seen as a decoding process, with the reader passively receiving information from the text. Now reading is viewed more as a process where the reader actively constructs meaning from the story. Gray (1926, as cited in Simonson, 1995) claims “pupils need direction in reading in each of the separate content areas” (p. 100).

The concepts of reading instruction have been known in teaching at the elementary level for years, but as children travel through the grades, the purpose of reading changes (Wood, 1992 as cited in Alnassar, 2000). Secondary-school teachers are the best people to teach reading because they know their students’ strengths and weaknesses, and they are knowledgeable about their own content areas (Alnassar, 2000). The study skills and content-reading functional approach claim that content area teachers are the best to authentically incorporate reading (M. A. Forget, as cited in K. Forget, 2004; Vacca & Vacca, 2002, p. 51). Leggitt (1934) ran a study using lessons that integrated reading and study skills with content areas and noticed that students increased their ability to working skills when they practiced those skills within subject matter, instead of alone.
Content Literacy Programs

In response to the problem of failing adolescent literacy, content literacy programs have begun to resurface in the middle and high schools (Vacca, 2002). Content literacy is often defined as the level of reading and writing skill that learners need in an academic subject to understand and reply to ideas in texts used for instructional purposes. Content literacy instructional practices help develop the comprehension strategies students need to think about texts.

In the past, content literacy instruction was not practiced, despite the attention given to it (Ratekin, Simpson, Alvermann, & Dishner, as cited in Vacca, 2002). The responsibility for teaching reading and writing has fallen on English/language arts teachers and reading specialists. Language arts and reading teachers need content-area teachers to show students how to read and write in their content area (Vacca, 2002). More and more content-area teachers acknowledge this duty responsibility and are incorporating content literacy strategies into their teaching (Vacca, 2002).

Supports for content-area teachers are important. Schools should provide classroom teachers with reading specialist services. Schools need to establish staff development, including instructional strategy workshops, teacher inquiry projects, and action research in content areas in the upper grades (Vacca, 2002).

The concept of content literacy is firmly rooted in the traditions of the literacy field. Unfortunately, content literacy practices have not made their way into content-area
classrooms in a big way. With a focus on comprehension it is time for a reemergence of content literacy programs across the United States (Vacca, 2002).

**How Content Literacy Helps Students Learning/Achievement**

Secondary school teachers play an important role in influencing reading growth in students (Alnassar, 2000), and the content teacher is best qualified to teach reading in a subject area (Bradberry, 2003; Robinson & Thomas, 1969). Because content teachers have the knowledge in their fields, and are aware of learning processes, they are best equipped to teach reading skills students need to comprehend content information (Flanagan, 1975). It is the content teacher’s responsibility to use their knowledge to share reading with their students in the most effective way possible (Frederick, 1972, pp.10-14). Others in the field of reading (Alnassar, 2000; Bamman, Hogan, & Greene, 1969; Hargrove, 1973; Herber, 1978; Lenski, Wham, & Johns, 1999; Masey & Moore, 1966; McQuagge, 1974; Vacca & Alvermann, 1998) agree that content teachers must share the responsibility to teach students to read. It is important that preservice teachers be prepared to teach reading to learn within content areas because it is there that teachers can best learn about aspects of the text and strategies specific to each discipline (Armbruster, 1992, 1993).
Content Literacy for Diverse Students

Learning-Disabled Students

Learning disabled (LD) students are considered to have problems obtaining and using skills because of problems with language and abstract concepts (Swanson & Hoskyn, as cited in Graham, et al., 2007, p. 221). Nationally, about 10% of students are identified as having learning disabilities, although some states identify 1 in 5 students as such (McGill-Franzen & Allington, as cited in Bryant, 2003). Approximately 80% of LD students have reading problems (National Research Council, as cited in Bryant, 2003). “Most students have already had failures and have not profited from instruction or support. Instead these students need individual and specific instruction” (Graham et al., 2007, p. 222). Middle-school students with learning disabilities have poor self-esteem that leads to little motivation, avoidance of risk in learning situations, disengagement from learning, and behavior problems (Graham et al., 2007). In addition, middle-school LD students only have a small number of methods that are not currently working for them. These observations correlate with information that students with learning difficulties need to incorporate strategies automatically and fluently (Graham et al., 2007, p. 223). Students with the most debilitating learning difficulties have problems in both naming speed and phonology (Graham et al., 2007, p. 224). Those students who have fewer problems will struggle with phonological awareness, which may affect comprehension. Wolf’s work (as cited in Graham, et al., 2007) has resulted in the
emphasis on improving reading fluency as a vital component of effective reading interventions” (see Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, as cited in Graham, et al., 2007, p. 224).

**Second Language Learners**

Students in today’s classrooms demonstrate various levels of competency in the classroom language (Hadaway & Young, 1994, p. 522). This applies to all children to some extent, but especially to second language learners (Cantoni-Harvey; Crandall; and Cummins, all as cited in Hadaway and Young, 1994).

Content areas provide the best experiences for literacy as well as the use of reading and writing opportunities (Hadaway & Young, 1994, p. 522). Principles believed to be effective with language-diverse children, such as integrating language with content instruction (Snow & Brinton, as cited in Hadaway and Young, 1994), using cooperative problem-solving activities (Moll & Diaz, as cited in Hadaway and Young, 1994), and knowledge (Reyes & Molner, as cited in Hadaway and Young, 1994), are equally appropriate for all children in our classrooms. To help students with graphic organization of concepts, Hadaway and Young (1994) recommend using 1) timelines, 2) Venn diagrams, 3) h-maps, 4) flow charts, and 5) graphs/charts. Hadaway and Young also share that maps and realia can help students who need visual examples to understand content better.
**Deaf Students**

Students who experience difficulty in learning to read and write lack participation in classroom learning are at high risk for school failure and of lifelong learning problems. For students who are deaf the list of potential negative consequences increases because of the role that literacy plays in interaction. For example, watching television, making a phone call, sending an e-mail, or asking for directions demand literacy skills (Howell & Luckner, 2003). Students with disabilities are expected to participate and show improvements just like their peers and to participate in extracurricular activities (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1997). Therefore, teachers of deaf students have knowledge in ways of teaching content along with reading and writing (Howell & Luckner, 2003).

Deaf students have a hard time developing the strategies needed to understand expository text (Strassman, as cited in Howell & Luckner, 2003). Reading is often seen as an obstacle that keeps them from understanding curriculum (Howell & Luckner, 2003). Explicit teaching and practice of strategies can help them become more comfortable with reading textbooks, to succeed in content-area classes, and improve comprehension (Salembier, as cited in Howell & Luckner, 2003).

**History of Teaching Reading in Content Areas**

At the turn of the 20th century, while the debate of oral reading versus silent reading raged, support for the value of silent reading grew. Researchers started to look at
reading processes. Then researchers began to study the way students read subject-matter texts. Usually this was done silently and independently. Successful students were adjusting to the type of the passage depending on the subject. Researchers began to understand how instruction might donate to more success for students. Therefore, content-area reading instruction began (Simonson, 1995).

Content-area reading instruction originated in the early 1900s (Simonson, 1995). Researchers and administrators were excited about early programs of content-area reading. The 1940s and 1950s saw many changes in the philosophy of reading in reading practices implemented school-wide (Simonson, 1995). In the 1930s, ’40s, and ’50s, William S. Gray called for reading to be taught across the curriculum to all students, with the slogan, “All teachers are teachers of reading” (Quinn, 1995). Ernest Horn (as cited in Quinn, 1995) also advocated wide reading in the subject areas to enhance achievement.

In the 1940s and ’50s, reading was isolated from writing with the separation of the National Council of Teachers of English and the formation of the International Reading Association. Conversation about incorporating reading and writing no longer had a place; reading, writing, and English teachers had few opportunities to interact; and the IRA removed the teaching of reading in high school from content-area learning (Quinn, 1995).

The 1960s opened education’s doors to encourage equality and equal opportunity to all Americans (Cross, as cited in Quinn, 1995). Open admissions and National Defense Loan monies enabled many nontraditional and minority students to go to college.
Remedial programs and classes were available. By 1969, the federal Right to Read program had been established to address functional illiteracy (Quinn, 1995). Clifford (as cited in Quinn, 1995) claims attention to reading skills caused reading to be removed from content learning and reading to be viewed as remedial. Another problem with teaching in content areas was lack of training. Most teacher education programs in the 1960s and 1970s did not require a course in reading methods for secondary education majors (Simonson, 1995). In 1965, the College Entrance Examination Board proposed a separation of high school English into language, literature, and composition (College Entrance Examination Board, as cited in Quinn, 1995). This would further separate reading from content learning (Quinn, 1995).

In the 1970s, the start of the whole language method ensured the comeback of content-area reading (Dishner & Readence, as cited in Quinn, 1995). Also during this period, successful programs of content-area reading instruction began to emerge as teachers became more involved in the decision-making process (Simonson, 1995). Teaching of reading was not popular in the 1980s. Classroom observations and interviews in the 1980s found that very little reading was given in content-area textbooks. Students saw the teacher as the primary source of information and skimmed the textbook for answers to complete homework sheets (Simonson, 1995). The publication of *A Nation At Risk* in 1983 and *Becoming a Nation of Readers* in 1985 were calls for teachers and researchers (Quinn, 1995). Their recommendations were to teach students to use reading and writing to learn content in all subjects. State departments of education across the
United States started mandating content reading courses for middle and secondary teachers. This stemmed from the fact that national assessments showed that students had difficulty with planning and analysis in reading and writing activities (Moje, 1996). Research (e.g., Alvarez, 1983; Armbruster, Anderson, & Meyer, 1991; Palinscar & Brown, as cited in Moje, 1996) directed the development and distribution of reading and writing improvement skills taught in secondary content reading courses (Moje, 1996).

The 1990s have shown an increased focus on teaching reading and writing to learn content (Quinn, 1995). Increased awareness comes from the transition of courses dedicated to developmental reading and writing strategies instruction to courses designed to integrate all literacy processes in secondary content classes (Readence, Bean & Baldwin, cited in Moje, 1996).

**Political Factors**

World War I brought awareness to problems with illiteracy. Thousands of soldiers, it seems, could not read well enough to do their jobs. Combined with the availability of newly refined standardized tests for identification and analysis of reading problems, the discovery was a major focus for research in reading in the 1930s. Although few, if any, instructional programs to improve reading skills were implemented during the 1930s, the interest during this time supplied the base for much of the research on program development (Ruddell, 2001). During World War II, the War Department issued urgent calls for linguists (Scott, 2005). With America’s entrance in World War II, the
military again discovered that many soldiers could not read. This discovery served as a final piece for the implementation of remedial reading programs in junior and senior high schools (Ruddell, 2001). Although not widespread, such programs were the nation’s first attempt to provide systematic reading instruction. By the mid- to late 1940s, leaders were suggesting that developmental reading programs be established in the middle and secondary grades (Bond & Bond, 1941; Gray, as cited in Ruddell, 2001).

Secondary remedial programs expanded in the 1950s. Reading instruction and reading disability received professional and public scrutiny. With the publication of Rudolph Flesch’s *Why Johnny Can’t Read* (1955) and the launch of the Soviet satellite Sputnik in 1957, questions were raised about the quality of reading instruction in American education. Increased interest in developmental secondary reading programs and content-area reading instruction resulted. In 1958, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), which provided money for research, teacher education, and school programs (Ruddell, 2001).

Secondary remedial reading programs continued to expand in the 1960s (Ruddell, 2001). Most programs were funded by the Title I section of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, which had strict federal guidelines about testing, student selection, and teacher certification. Finding certified secondary-reading specialists was a problem during this time. Many developmental reading classes were taught by untrained English teachers. By the mid- to late 1960s, content-area reading instruction received diverse recognition and support. Those in favor of content-area
reading instruction made a clear distinction between their instructional approaches—which addressed literacy development in the service of subject matter learning—and traditional developmental reading instruction that focused specifically on learning how to read (Herber, 1970, 1978).

In the 1970s, learning resource centers contributed to the various populations (Ruddell, 2001). Developmental programs focused on students known to be reading below grade level. By the end of the decade, publishers added junior-high books to their reading series to confront demands. Developmental reading at the middle and secondary level was seen as something foreign on the inside of their classroom. Therefore, some junior high schools added an additional hour of developmental reading class, and some replaced English with a reading class.

In the 1980s, remedial reading was still the topic with expansion in developmental and accelerated programs, as well as attention to content reading instruction (Ruddell, 2001). Most remedial reading programs were funded through Chapter 1 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981 (ECIA), which superseded Title I. “Reading Across the Curriculum” replaced “Every Teacher a Teacher of Reading” as the slogan for secondary reading in-service programs and was the reason for requirements that all secondary teachers have at least one course in reading methods.

It was during this time that the middle-school movement gained attention (Moore and Stefanich, 1990). Rooted in the 1960s, the movement originated from teachers’ beliefs that junior high schools did not meet the needs of their students (Ruddell, 2001).
An assumption of the middle school movement was that structure and instructional practice must be open to changes involved with transescence (the period between the ages of 10 and 14) and share experiences to advance students’ transition into adolescence (Eichorn, 1966; Irwin, 1990; Moore & Stefanich, 1990; Ruddell, 2001). Embedded in the middle-school movement was the goal to instruct on “higher literacy and thinking strategies,” and throughout the 1980s school districts transformed junior high schools to implement these ideals (Moore & Stefanich, 1990, p. 8). Interest in including literature in reading instruction amplified in the 1980s, due partly by political forces (Martinez & McGee, 2000). The California State Department of Education’s Reading Initiative (1986) aroused interest throughout the country; a direct outgrowth was the National Reading Initiative, a group that was created to improve literacy (Cullinan, as cited in Martinez & McGee, 2000). Texas’s Proclamation 68 (1990) came quickly after the reforms in California and resulted in a new generation of literature-based basal programs (Martinez & McGee, 2000, p. 165).

The nation experienced a major wave of education reform due to the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, sponsored by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. This reform was followed by reports (e.g., Anderson, Heibert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; Boyer, 1983; Goodlad, 1984; Sizer, as cited in Ruddell, 2001) that homed in on literacy and various groups for students’ failure of students to move beyond basic literacy levels (Ruddell, 2001). Dissention led to discussion and reform. A major reform emphasis was movement away from basics and
toward a critical thinking and critical reading focus. Also important was discussion of connecting reading and writing processes. A major focus of secondary schools was “Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum” (Ruddell, 2001).

As schools restructured toward the end of integrated and inquiry-based learning in middle and secondary schools (Harste, 1994; Pace, 1995b; Stevenson & Carr, as cited in Ruddell, 2001) and a more student-centered curriculum (Chaskin & Rauner, 1995; Noddings, as cited in Ruddell, 2001), legislators and others outside education argued for a back-to-basics approach (Lucas, as cited in Ruddell, 2001) to separate literacy instruction from content learning. Programs evolved on content teachers skills to provide instructional support for students (Ruddell, 2001).

At the new millennium, reform movements and practices are under close observation by the public. Educators (Atwell, 1990, 1998; Rose, 1989; Ruddell, as cited in Ruddell, 2001) are calling for changes in how middle and secondary students are instructed as well as their needs. Contemporary middle and secondary reading and writing instruction seem to be moving toward continued, systematic literacy instruction for all students throughout their school years. Teachers will then be able to focus on the literacy processes of the students they teach (Ruddell, 2001).
Trends and Issues in Content Literacy Instruction

Constructivist Learning

Ruddell (2001) explains that constructivist teaching and learning is the answer to the traditional teacher-dominated classroom (p. 364). Windschitl (1999) shares that constructivist teaching and learning are based on a theoretical stance and teachers’ beliefs that

[1]earners actively create, interpret and reorganize knowledge in individual ways; … that their students’ background knowledge profoundly affects how they interpret subject matter and that students learn best when they apply their knowledge to solve authentic problems, engage in “sense-making” dialogue with peers, and strive for deep understanding of core ideas rather than recall of a laundry list of facts (p. 752).

Smerdon, Burkami, and Lee (1999) summarize the assumptions on which this theoretical stance and these teacher beliefs rest:

[S]ome of our notion of what constitutes “knowledge” may be culturally constructed, rather than truth or fact; 2) knowledge is distributed among group members and the knowledge of the group is greater than the sum of the knowledge of individuals; and 3) learning is an active, rather than passive, process of knowledge construction (p. 8).

Three curricular and instructional themes recur with the literature of constructivist learning and teaching: integrated studies, interdisciplinary curricula, and collaborative learning (Ruddell, 2001).
**Integrated Studies**

*Connectedness* means that barriers are reduced between subject areas and learning is enhanced across the curriculum (Ruddell, 2001). Thus the assumption is that students learn subject-area content when knowledge is not separated from other subject areas. This idea demands that learning be holistic (p. 365). Such a view of learning correlates with what George, Stevenson, Thomason, and Beane (as cited in Pace, 1995b) share as the new vision of middle-level education. This vision, they claim parallels good general curriculum theory. Such curriculum should include:

1. A learner-centered environment. This means a) curriculum comes from students’ questions discussed by the teacher and students, and b) curriculum is constructivist, therefore students develop their own meanings. Everyone is seen as a learner.

2. An integrated curriculum. This means a) no traditional limits, b) integration of affective and cognitive activities, and c) learning from purposeful questions.

3. Appropriate evaluation processes. This means a) learning goals that address personal and social questions; b) identifying themes, knowledge, and resources and c) students learn various information (Pace, as cited in Ruddell, 2001).
Interdisciplinary Instruction

Interdisciplinary instruction may involve teachers meeting to do cross-curricular planning or team teaching (MacIver, as cited in Ruddell, 2001). Pace (1995a), Siu-Runyan and Faircloth (1995), and Stevenson and Carr (1993) (all as cited in Ruddell, 2001) explain that sometimes the interdisciplinary curriculum develops into an integrated approach in which students learn through inquiry and projects. Many middle and some high schools are implementing interdisciplinary instruction (Ruddell, 2001, p. 366).

Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning is important in middle schools and is beginning to occur in some high schools as well (Moore & Stefanich, as cited in Ruddell, 2001, p. 366 and 367). The middle-school reform movement facilitates implementation of collaborative learning in schools (Alexander, 1987; Braddock, 1990; Condon & Hoffman, 1990; Dionesio, as cited in Ruddell, 2001, p. 367).

Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning is based on students developing projects to learn (Ruddell, 2001). Two requirements for project-based learning include 1) topics from students’ needs and 2) an interdisciplinary approach.

Bean (Bean, Bean, & Bean, 1999) uses his daughters’ school experiences to illustrate these two conditions. His daughter Kristen has a science teacher who engages
students in writing science reports about things outside of school. Shannon’s social studies teacher uses art and music to commit students to a deeper understanding of her content area. She offers her students choices in how they come to learn about various areas of history. Students are graded on the time and effort they put into making their project.

Harste (as cited in Ruddell, 2001) shares that the origin of project-based learning is inquiry. He explains that inquiry is a deeply felt, inner need to know:

Viewing curriculum as inquiry means that I envision classrooms as sites of inquiry, or as communities of learners. Inquiry is not a technical skill to be applied at will, but rather a philosophical stance that permeates the kinds of lives we choose to live (as cited in Ruddell, 2001, p. 375).

Inquiry can be used by teachers to incorporate project-based learning (Ruddell, 2001, p. 375). Ruddell (2001) explains that Harste (1994) recommends that students and teachers look at what they know and decide what it is they want to know. Learning can grow from students’ questions. Students use reading and writing skills to seek answers to their questions instead of focusing on state-mandated curriculum (p. 375).

When implementing project-based learning, teachers ask students what they already know about a particular subject (Ruddell, 2001, p. 375). Then students share things they don’t know and things they want to learn.

Marker (1993) suggests the following series of questions to guide a similar process to develop ideas into quality projects:
1) What do we know [about this topic]?
2) What don’t we know?
3) What do we want to find out?
4) How can we find information?
5) What resources do we have?
6) How can we present our feelings?
7) How can we implement our findings? (pp. 82-83).

The teacher’s role in this process is to help students organizing projects and scaffolding them as they work in collaborative groups to completion of the projects (Ruddell, 2001).

**Experiential Learning**

Students’ content-area learning improves when they are immersed in experiential learning (Sturtevant, 1996). Examples include experiments, problem-solving, and real-life problems. A combination of language experiences can improve content learning and literacy (Sturtevant, 1996, p. 10).

An experiential and content literacy curriculum can have many advantages. It can help students develop meaning through hands-on activities. It can encourage literacy development through real-life uses of reading and writing. Teachers that Sturtevant interviewed stressed that since they changed their approaches, students have become
more interested and engaged in learning. Although their program development took time they believe it has been worthwhile (Sturtevant, 1996, p. 12, p. 13).

Structured Journal Writing

Journal writing helps students express themselves in writing and is an important skill to help students develop their ideas (Smith, Rook, & Smith, 2007). Hewitt (as cited in Smith et al., 2007) suggests that journal writing helps students with discussions. Students reported that writing in journals made them think more deeply, which gave them more ideas and helped make their thinking clearer. In another recent study, students took more responsibility for their own learning, were more reflective in their studies, and were able to share their thoughts and feelings through the use of a journal (Park, 2003, p. 45).

Journal activities can have a positive effect on grades, indicating that a combination of cognitive, metacognitive, and affective journal questions enhance content learning more than just cognitive or text-related questions (Smith et al., 2007).

Smith, Rook, and Smith (2007) suggest that teachers in content areas can help their students by promoting students to be critical thinkers and to use strategies. To help accomplish this goal, a teacher must a) commit to structured journal writing, b) provide classroom journals for students, and c) schedule time in lesson plans for students to respond to questions in their journals. To promote journal writing and student achievement a teacher must: a) model metacognitive questioning strategies in class, b) model affective questioning strategies in class, and c) practice critical reflection in class (Smith et al., 2007, p. 47).
After modeling, a teacher must be proficient in reviewing the course content to develop a) metacognitive questions that will help students make sense of content information, b) affective questions that require the interpretation of the students, and c) reflect on questions and decide whether these questions actually cause the student to think further (Smith et al., 2007). The teacher must a) provide questions to students in various ways and b) give feedback about what students have written in their journals (Smith et al., 2007, p. 47).

Smith et al. (2007) conclude that “[t]eaching students how to activate their brain will help them assume responsibility for their own learning and feel good about themselves. Students gain a voice through affective questions gives a voice to students” (p. 47). Critical thinking and motivation is supported by combining approaches (Goh, 2004; Smith, as cited in Smith et al., 2007).

Perceptions of Content Literacy Among Teachers and Schools

Resistance to Content-Area Literacy

The reasons for lost interest in or disengagement from content-area reading have been well documented (Derby, 1987; Kinder, Bursuck, & Epstein, 1992; Morgan, Otto, & Thompson, 1976; Richardson & Morgran, 2003; Singer & Bean, as cited in K. Forget, 2004). In a review of studies of pre- and in-service teachers’ perceptions of and attitudes toward using literacy strategies to teach content, Moje (1996) found that teachers resisted using strategies and didn’t take responsibility for literacy practices. Research tells us that
many preservice teachers do not view content reading as important to teaching subject matter (Conley, as cited in Dynak, 1996/1997; Ratekin, Simpson, Alvermann, & Dishner, 1985; Stewart & O’Brien, 1989). Explaining reasons for the use of content-reading strategies has not improved teachers’ resistance or helped incorporate content area reading. Courses that model comprehension strategies for teachers increase abilities to comprehend content area text, but personal usage is still ambiguous (Dynak & Smith, as cited in Dynak, 1996/1997).

There are many reasons why content literacy is hard to incorporate into the secondary school, including the complexity of the problem, issues of occupational selection, preservice indoctrination, ego defensiveness, curricular traditions, and professional training (Hargrove, 1973, p. 42). In reviewing literature on the subject, the researcher found four reasons teachers don’t incorporate reading in content areas: 1) issues with teacher control, 2) content-area loyalty, 3) time and curricular constraints, and 4) teacher misperceptions.

**Issues with Teacher Control**

Teachers may resist teaching reading in content areas because they feel that they may lose some of their power or control (O’Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995). Several studies (e.g., Alvermann & Moore, 1991; Alvermann, O’Brien, & Dillon, 1990; Ratekin et al., 1985; Smith & Feathers, 1983a, 1983b) have found that secondary students often depend on teacher lecture as their primary source of information. O’Brien and Stewart (as
cited in Simonson, 1995) found very little textbook reading required in the content-area classroom. The teacher seems to be the primary source of information.

Many aspects of content literacy go against the pedagogies of dominance and telling. Using various texts and promoting independent reading to gain knowledge may go against teacher control. Both text and student would become the focus to learning. By focusing instruction on learning with texts, content-area literacy instructional methods have tried to remove teachers from their main focal positions in instruction (O’Brien et al., 1995).

**Content-Area Loyalty**

According to O’Brien and Stewart (1990), “Content literacy is difficult to incorporate into the secondary school due to the resistance in beliefs and traditions of school life relating to teachers roles and allegiance to their own content area” (p. 101). Content-area literacy threatens to confuse subject area divisions incorporated in the curriculum (O’Brien et al., 1995). Studies of secondary teachers’ attitudes toward reading in content areas showed that teachers felt content-subject knowledge was their first priority, but content reading instruction should be taught (Manzo & Manzo, 1997; O’Connor, 1986).

Secondary teachers’ instructional methods are shaped by technical rationality and loyalty to their own content area (O’Brien et al., 1995). Technical rationality is the result of reformers who wished to incorporate an industrial management model on institutions
for education for all at the turn of the century (Marshall & Tucker, as cited in O’Brien et al., 1995, p. 447). According to O’Brien, Stewart, and Moje (1995), the mass production model of high schools in comparison to the industrialized economy, was accepted to raise the competence of an educational system that was founded to furnish the workforce. The success of the curriculum is gauged by coverage of content (Boyer; McLaughlin, Talbert, & Bascia; Powell, Farrar, & Cohen; Sedlack, Wheeler, Pullin, & Cusick, as cited in O’Brien et al., 1995). Teachers don’t implement content-area reading strategies because their allegiance is to imparting knowledge, instead of developers of minds (K. Forget, 2004). Teacher education programs continue this problem. O’Brien (as cited in Reynolds, 1990) expressed frustration working with preservice teachers in content-area classrooms because they come from “subcultures” of subject matter, with beliefs about subject matter that have powerful political opposition to many changes including content-area reading instruction (p. 22). O’Brien found that preservice teachers refused future use of reading strategies out of loyalty to their subject matter (Reynolds, 1990, p. 22). Rafferty (as cited in Reynolds, 1990) similarly found that preservice teachers have problems incorporating content-area literacy principles because those principles go against the paradigms in which they were taught. Incorporating these principles requires preservice teachers to change their beliefs about good teaching appropriate subject-matter and the kind of subject matter at the same time (Reynolds, 1990). O’Brien and Stewart (1990) claim preservice secondary education teachers were more concerned with doing what others in
their respective departments were doing and covering material than with focusing on students needs for reading in the content areas.

**Time and Curricular Restraints**

Time also is a problem in incorporating reading in the content area classes (Bradberry, 2003; Madden, 2000; Schubert, 1971). Teachers view instruction in reading in content areas as more work to do (Hargrove, 1973; McCullough, 1975). Based on observations, interviews, and conversations with teachers, Hodges (1982) found that many teachers don’t use instructional practices while teaching content-areas because they think that they are convinced that using such practices are too time consuming. In addition, content teachers may view content literacy as an additional burden, and added subject to teach (O’Brien & Stewart, 1990). Many studies have found that teachers feel they do not have time to teach content-area literacy due to demands of their curricula (see, for example, Alvermann & Moore, 1991; Blintz, 1997; Haque, 1976; Hollingsworth & Teel, 1991; Irvin, 1990; Jackson & Cunningham, 1994; Jones, 1970; Kozey, 1980; Madden, 2000; O’Brien & Stewart, 1992; Schumm, Vaughn, & Saumell, 1992). Boyer (1983) speculates that the resistance comes from what they see as another burden and is made worse by their opposition to the host of other tasks they need to perform.
**Teacher Misperceptions**

Many administrators and subject-area teachers feel that they must teach either their discipline or reading; they cannot do both (Clary, 1974; Hodges, 1982). Teachers also claim they are not reading teachers and it is not their job to teach reading (Alnassar, 2000; Bradberry, 2003; Hollingsworth & Teel, 1991; O’Brien & Stewart, 1990; Wilson, 1995). Each content teacher must help students use reading skills to learn the language, vocabulary, and concepts in his or her particular subject area. Reading skills are best taught using content materials so instruction could be relevant and purposeful (Massey & Moore, as cited in Flanagan, 1975, p. 18). By attending to reading skills in content areas the adolescent-level teacher encourages achievement and interest in the subject area. Secondary teachers are usually not prepared and not willing to deal with the issue of reading (Russell, 1974; Sartain & Stanton, as cited in McCullough, 1975, p. 10). Subject-matter teachers view the well-intentioned 1937 slogan “Every teacher is a teacher of reading” as a challenge to their discipline (Haque, 1976). Some believe that “every teacher a teacher of reading” means that every teacher should teach reading explicitly in their content areas (Jacobsen, 1998, p. 218).

**Responsibility for Content-Area Reading**

So whose responsibility is it to teach reading in content areas? It depends on whom you ask. President George W. Bush says it’s everyone’s job to teach reading:
If children come to first grade able to read, great! We will help them become advanced readers. If they come to school unable to read, then we must teach them to read. If students have been promoted when they are not capable of doing the work, then we must stop and instruct those students and bring them up to grade level or better (2003, p. 2).

Many teachers (and educational researchers) think reading should be taught elsewhere and at another time (Bean & Readence, 1989; Bintz, 1997; Bradgstad, 1970; Cohen, 1975; Donahue, 2000; Haque, 1976; Hesse, Smith, & Nettleton, 1973; McDonald, 1971; O’Brien & Stewart, 1990; Smith, Bragstad, & Hesse, 1970; Smith, Otto, & Hansen, 1978). Secondary teachers believe that the ability to complete purposeful reading tasks should be a skill that a student has mastered by high school (Barton, as cited in Madden, 2000). Secondary teachers think of reading instruction at that level as remedial (Haque, 1976) and instruction should be delivered by special reading teachers in special classes using special materials (Herber, 1978; Nelson & Herber, 1982; Readence et al., 1989; Roe et al., 1987; Singer & Donlan, 1989; Vacca & Vacca, 1989; Umans, 1963).

But many authorities agree that reading cannot be separated from content (Artley, 1944; Mazurkiewicz, 1970; Squire, 1973; Taschow, 1969; Weiss, 1970). Reading and study skills don’t have to be taught by themselves; they can be taught along with course content, and thus content and process do not have to be kept separate (Herber, 1970). The job of the content teacher is to teach reading to allow the learning of content (Kozey, 1980). Content-area subjects are where students encounter meaningful information (Dickson, 1995). Reading and writing in content areas greatly enhances students’ ability to comprehend and process information in expository text (Armbruster, as cited in
Dickson, 1995). Thus reading at the secondary level should not be seen as a teaching practice outlined to teach the essentials of subject matter more effectively (Readence, as cited in Alnassar, 2000).

Most professionals in secondary reading education agree that reading and study-skills instruction should be taught in all content areas (Gillespie & Rasinski, as cited in Alnassar, 2000). More systems are adopting the philosophy that developmental reading instruction in secondary school is best carried out by classroom teachers through the content areas (Morgan & Kahsar, 1977). The reasoning goes like this:

1) Students must be able to read to think at a higher level and learn the language of the subject-area and it is the content teacher who is responsible for teaching that.

2) It is the adolescent teachers who are responsible for teaching literacy skills because more literacy skills are required as students advance in the grades (Ruddell, 2001).

The responsibility for much of that instruction of literacy in middle and secondary schools rests on the shoulders of classroom teachers (Ruddell, 2001). This does not require content-area teachers to become reading teachers or specialists (K. Forget, 2004). By using subject-related material regularly, content teachers can supply the teaching of reading skills and course content. Neither has to be sacrificed (Bradberry, 2003). For example, a science teacher covering a unit on plants can teach students the origin of plant words. By looking at the origin of these words, students can then apply their meanings to
construct a working definition to help them answer questions about the plant. Students who know the prefix *bryo*- means *moss* and that moss usually grows in wet areas could match *bryophytes* to its definition of small, mostly terrestrial plants that require moist habitats and lack vascular (conducting) tissue.

**Strategies to Teach Content Literacy**

*Content Literacy Continuum.*

Adolescents who lack basic literacy skills need intensive, focused, sustained instruction to help them catch up with their peers (Hock & Deshler, 2003). One example of such instruction is the Content Literacy Continuum (CLC), with five levels of literacy support that should be in place in every secondary school (Hock & Deshler, 2003).

Level 1: Ensuring mastery of critical content in all subject-area classes. Adolescents with deficient literacy have great problems understanding and gaining information in content area classrooms. These teachers can implement expedients to help students’ comprehension. These devices help students increase knowledge and achievement. These adjustments help students who struggle, although Level 1 interventions help all students in a diverse class.

Level 2: Weaving learning strategies within rigorous general education classes. When Level 1 interventions aren’t successful, teachers can implement methods at level 2 of the intervention continuum. Students with problems in reading have difficulty with strategies. Content-area teachers search for ways to share with students to aid
comprehension. Teachers must show and expect students to use these strategies. By focusing on strategies in their content, teachers help students acquire strategies to emphasize further learning.

Level 3: Interventions may be necessary. Students with problems in reading get help from non-content teachers. Instruction continues until mastery of the strategy.

Level 4: Developing intensive instructional options for students who lack foundational skills. In nearly every high school, there are students who struggle with strategies in level 3 interventions. In this case teachers need to use interventions at levels 4 and 5. Students who use level 4 interventions learn information and strategies through direct and intensive instruction. Specialists work together to unfold experiences developed to focus on problems with reading.

Level 5: Developing intense clinical options for language intervention. In level 5 interventions, students who have problems with language learn skills they need in order to gain the content skills and strategies. At this level, speech pathologists and other support personnel deliver instruction. In reciprocal teaching, content-area teachers teach and discuss how to predict, question, and summarize.

**Modeling**

Modeling happens when a person demonstrates a behavior that has been performed for them by another person (Frayer & Klausmeier, 1972; O’Leary & O’Leary, 1972). Modeling refers to learning a new behavior, or modifying already known behavior
through another’s actions and its consequences (Nagle, 1976, p. 631). Teachers can model new learning by showing and reinforcing the necessary steps of the new behavior (Nagle, 1976).

The best way to teach new skills is through call-and-response. With call-and-response the students mimic the teacher. The aim is to learn the theory after the concept while depending on implicit knowledge (Haston, 2007). Modeling and imitation can improve students’ listening and evaluative skills (Haston, 2007). Relying on implicit knowledge and teaching the concept first improve students’ listening and evaluative skills so students can make independent decisions.

Teacher modeling is a common element identified across academic reading programs (Gambrell, 1996; Grubaugh, as cited in Methe & Hintze (2003). When used appropriately, teacher modeling for student imitations is a useful tool (Gordon, 1984; Haston, 2007; Kohut, 1973; Suzuki, 1984). Teaching concepts with appropriate modeling and imitation allows students to learn naturally and intuitively (Haston, 2007).

When teachers model content instruction, student comprehension can improve (Santa, 2006). Instructors who performed modeling reported that students paid attention to errors made and claimed modeling effectively increased student enthusiasm (Duncan, 1996). Fifth graders who learned through modeling—such as observing rotting through a compost column, studying friction and gravity by rolling LEGO cars down inclines, or using triangles to show the relationship between the height of objects and the length of
their shadows—performed at 12th-grade levels in math and science (Lehrer & Schauble, as cited in “Hands-On Learning,” 1999).

**Good Relationships With Students**

One of the best predictors of students’ engagement in school is their relationships with teachers (Osterman, as cited in Stipek, 2006). “To promote higher academic standards, teachers need to create supportive social contexts and develop positive relationships with students” (Stipek, 2006, p. 46). “There is increasing evidence that schools are not meeting the needs of increasing numbers of young people, especially those at the secondary level, whose backgrounds have placed them at a disadvantage” (Smyth & Fasoli, 2007, p. 273).

The Australian Centre for Equity Through Education and the Australian Youth Research Center (2001) established elements that put young people at risk of leaving school. In interviews from 20 sites across Australia and with 20 young people who were in school and 10 who were not, researchers found that relationships, responsibility, and respect were important factors linking young people to school.) “Urban students share that when a teacher shows concern they feel they owe the teacher and don’t want to disappoint the teacher” (Davidson, 1999, p.46). Caring is shown when teachers being attentive and receptive; the relationship is continuous and shows personal understanding. In addition, students recognize caring in teachers who are prepared and organized (Noddings, as cited in Thompson, Greer, & Greer, 2004).
Young children share information with teachers who are affectionate and nurturing, and these relationships promote promise and learning (Pianta, 1999, p. 46). Listening, gentle explanatory responses, and positive emotions promote positive relationships with young children. Young children feel teachers care when teachers are being attentive (“She says ‘hi’ to me when I come in the room”); address their nonacademic needs (“She saves a snack for me if I miss snack time”); and are fair (“She makes sure I get a turn”; Pianta, 1999).

Young adolescents view their teachers as less nurturing and therefore those students have less motivation and achievement (Feldlaufer, Midgley, & Eccles, 1988; Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, as cited in Wentzel, 2002). Similarly, young adolescents’ perceptions that teachers care about them have been related positively to their pursuit of social and academic goals, mastery orientations toward learning, and academic interest (Wentzel, 1997).

However, students who struggle academically usually don’t have good relationships with their teachers (Stipek, 2006). Teachers need to make special efforts with these students by giving positive feedback, showing a personal interest in and interacting positively with the students they find most difficult to teach, going out of their way to compliment positive behaviors, showing an interest in the students’ lives outside school, listening to the students, and problem solving. Many students will apply themselves for teachers who are committed and care for them (Stipek, 2006, p. 49).
Thompson, Greer, and Greer’s (2004) study of university students determined 12 common characteristics that are important in what students see being a good teacher. All of these characteristics center around caring.

1) Fairness. Every university student surveyed listed fairness as a characteristic of favorite teachers. The students reported memories of unfair teachers in great detail, even after several years had passed.

2) Positive attitude. Another characteristic that was shown on the students’ list of teacher characteristics was the positive attitude that teachers brought into the classroom. Borich (2000) suggests that effective teachers are those who use praise to engage students (p. 15). In reverse, Wentzel (2002) found that negative feedback (lack of nurturance) was the most consistent negative predictor of academic performance and social behavior. Effective teachers are usually positive and believe in student achievement (Cruickshank, Jenkins, & Metcalf, 2003). Effective teachers try to catch students being good. Students in the study remembered teachers who praised them and the self-confidence that resulted.

3) Preparedness. Even young children know when a teacher is organized and prepared for the day’s lessons. Students were frustrated by teachers who had no idea of what they were doing. Students discussed competence and knowledge of content as characteristics of their favorite teachers. Students
shared that there were fewer behavior problems in classrooms where teachers were well prepared.

4) Personal touch. Students in the study shared that their favorite teachers connected with them in some way. Examples included calling a student by name, smiling, and asking students about their feelings as well as finding out about them personally. Teachers who bring their lives into the classroom establish trust with their students. Storytelling engages student interest. Smyth and Fasoli (2007) explain that extracurricular activities are good ways for difficult students to relate to their teachers differently (p. 290). These students enjoy the attention from their teachers (Thompson, Greer, & Greer, 2004). Davidson and Phelan (1999) share that adolescents work harder for teachers who express interest in their lives outside of school. They report that these caring teachers also show honesty, fairness, and trust. These teachers also involve students in decision making.

5) Sense of humor. Students in the Thompson et al. (2004) study remembered teachers who had a sense of humor. According to McDermott and Rothenberg (2000), teachers who had a sense of humor made learning fun. As long as it is not at any individual’s expense, good teachers can occasionally enjoy a laugh with the class and they can also laugh at themselves. Students recognize the strength reflected in teachers who are not threatened by foolish or silly mistakes that they make. Since students
sometimes find themselves in similarly embarrassing situations, good teachers can provide as wonderful models of how to deal with an embarrassing situation effectively.

6) Creativity. Many of the students in Thompson et al. (2004) remembered teachers who motivated them or did unusual things. For example, one teacher was remembered for an old bathtub painted green and filled with pillows and books, designated the “Reading Tub.” Another teacher was remembered for an igloo that she had in the back of her room. Constructed out of plastic bottles glued together in the shape of an igloo, it provided an enclosure into which children who earned the privilege could go and work quietly on puzzles and word-finds. Other teachers had large trunks in their elementary rooms full of dress-up clothes, offering a fun activity for rainy days. Some teachers were remembered for their unique ways of motivating their class. One teacher had challenged the class to reach a particular academic goal. If they did, she promised to kiss a pig. They reached the goal and she kissed the pig!

7) Willingness to admit mistakes. Students remember teachers who are willing to admit mistakes. Teachers who admit and apologize for their mistakes provide an excellent model to students, and are remembered as favorite teachers.
8) Forgiving. Teachers know that there are frequently personality conflicts between students and themselves. Students in the study had many memories of teachers who disliked a student, but their memories of favorite teachers reflected forgiveness for misbehavior and starting each day with a clean slate.

9) Respect. Students from the study shared that teachers who are given the highest amount of respect and love are those who give respect to their students. Favorite teachers were sensitive to students’ feelings and for avoiding embarrassing situations for students. Research has shown that students function well when they feel respected and valued. When students feel more comfortable with teachers, they take more risks, persevere when they run into difficulty, or ask questions when they are confused (National Research Council, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

10) High expectations. In Wentzel’s study (2002) of the utility of parent socialization models for understanding teachers’ influence on student adjustment in middle school, high expectations (maturity demands) was a consistent positive predictor of students’ goals and interests. These findings support a conclusion that students are motivated both socially and academically by expectations. They also provide support for previous work by Cskszentmihalyi and Rathunde (1993) suggesting that challenge that is developmentally appropriate can be highly motivational. According
to Irvine (2001) “students defined caring teachers as those who set limits, providing structure, held high expectations and pushed them to achieve” (p. 6-7). Teachers with positive attitudes also have high expectations for success. Teachers who have high expectations improve students’ achievement (Gill & Reynolds, 1999). Generally, students rise to their teachers’ expectations. The best teachers were remembered as having the highest standards and expected students to do their best. Being a caring and supportive teacher means holding students accountable while providing the support they need to succeed (Stipek, 2006, p. 47). Students from the study shared that when their teachers believed in their abilities; they were energized to do their best. Since expectations are often self-fulfilling, they must be implied with care and consideration. Being a caring and supportive teacher does not mean coddling (Stipek, 2006). Students in the study shared that if students hadn’t done their homework, their teachers made them miss recess to finish it. If they didn’t do their homework for several days in a row, teachers called or wrote a note to their parents (Stipek, 2006). Teachers encourage students by paying attention to them, giving feedback, accepting only the student’s best, and providing help when needed (Stipek, 2006, p. 48).

11) Compassion. Students in the study shared stories of how sensitivity and compassion of a favorite teacher affected them in lasting ways.
Cruickshank, Jenkins, and Metcalf (2003) report that effective teachers are supportive of students in various ways and engage their needs for belonging and achievement. These teachers were remembered for noticing when children were left out of games and for taking action to prevent students from being mistreated. These helped relieve students’ embarrassment.

12) Sense of belonging. Students from the study remembered feeling like they belonged in classrooms taught by their favorite teachers. Deci (as cited in Wentzel, 2002) claims that relationships can be powerful motivators toward school and provide students with a sense of belonging. Thompson et al. (2004) shared that students recalled that these teachers developed a sense of family in their classrooms and were emotionally safe. Teachers were remembered for preventing mean and hurtful behavior such as teasing and bullying. When children feel emotionally and physically safe, they learn better. Wentzel (2002) explains that teachers can have more of an influence on students than the students’ own parents (p. 297). Therefore, models of parent socialization can be generalized to nonfamilial contexts.

One way to increase student success is to build “developmental assets” (Scales & Taccogna, 2001). These assets deter students from risk behaviors that would prevent their success in school. One of the main aspects of asset building is that it is a way of living
and looking at students as people, creating environments that support students. Activities are reframed in a proactive way.

**Formative Assessment**

Formative assessment (otherwise known as monitoring) can be described as checking for understanding on a large scale (Fisher & Frey, as cited in Frey, Fisher, & Johnson, 2007). Writers have compared the term *assessment for learning* to formative assessment; that is, formative assessment is part of instruction that informs and guides teachers as they make instructional decisions. Assessment guides and enhances student learning, giving students specific suggestions for improvement (Swearingen, as cited in Marsh, 2007, p. 25 & 26).

Formative assessment is used to gather information that enhances instruction and promotes student achievement (Lee & Abell, 2007). Just as a doctor diagnoses symptoms, a teacher must diagnose student ideas before figuring how to help the student. (Osborne & Freyberg, as cited in Lee & Azbell, p. 66). A teacher uses assessment to monitor student’s learning and her own teaching methods (McNair, 2004) and uses this information to improve instruction.

Performance monitoring has begun to emerge from the political interest in accountability in schools (Henry & Dickey, 1993, p. 203). From *A Nation at Risk* to the court-ordered complete overhaul of the public school system in Kentucky, discontent with public education services has led to various proposals from dismantling educational...
bureaucracies by allowing school choice to increasing the accountability of the schools to the public. A common theme in most of the proposals is the need for performance monitoring (Henry & Dickey, 19993).

The first role for educational performance monitoring is some type of restructuring. Performance monitoring provides information on the outcomes of public services (Whooley, as cited in Henry & Dickey, 1993; Poister, 1983). The Ford Foundation (as cited in Henry & Dickey, 1993) explains that teachers and administrators can use information on educational performance as a base for observing positives and negatives of educational practices and programs. The baseline can be used by stakeholders for planning specific objectives for improvement, and important factor in realizing educational improvements. Richards and Shujaa (as cited in Henry & Dickey, 1993) claim other uses of the education performance data, such as incentive-based rewards, are also included in many reform recommendations. In its second role, performance monitoring holds up a mirror to the reforms (Henry & Dickey, 1993). Performance monitoring can show the results and context of schooling to educators and parents. Henry & Dickey (1993) explain the difference between these purposes is one of planning versus evaluation. In planning the system is used to improve education. The evaluation function is used to assess the contact of the improvements. Together the systems can provide more accountability and an improvement in education.
While many argue that accountability gives schools a chance to check student achievement, many argue against one-shot assessment and too much focus on test preparation (Santi & Vaughn, 2007).

Most teachers asked to administer progress-monitoring assessments to low-performing students would agree that it is time well spent. Many of the assessments teachers give can be very worthwhile if they understand and use these assessments effectively. However, many teachers aren’t trained on how to interpret the results so they can use the data to improve instruction (Santi & Vaughn, 2007; Swearingen, as cited in Marsh, 2007). School leaders are responsible for that valuable information and how it is used and understood by teachers to improve instruction. “The use of ongoing monitoring can be quickly administered, interpreted, and adjusted to further achievement” (Santi & Vaughn, 2007, pp. 535–36).

A starting point for linking assessment back to instruction is the use of progress monitoring. Progress monitoring gives teachers a tool to make sure students are continually making progress toward benchmark goals. To become an integral part of teaching teachers should plan, implement, and monitor student progress (Santi & Vaughn, 2007). When teachers use data on a continuous basis and change instruction based on the data, they are in effect providing intervention to match students’ needs, as teachers can quickly review the information and adjust instruction without waiting for results to be returned from a secondary company. Therefore, progress monitoring, when
used frequently, can be a powerful tool to increase student performance (Santi & Vaughn, 2007).

Clark (2001) suggests that the key factors of formative assessment include 1) effective feedback to pupils; 2) students actively involved in their own learning; 3) using assessment to adjust teaching; 4) a realization of the importance of assessment of its effect on the motivation and self-esteem of students; and 5) self-assessment and improvement.

**Benefits of Formative Assessment**

Formative assessment is valuable for both teachers and students. Formative assessment gives teachers information about how their students are achieving and they use this information to make adjustments in their teaching. Students can also benefit from feedback since it points out gaps in their learning. Formative assessment therefore promises and engages student motivation, raises achievement, and keeps teachers informed of individual needs (Marsh, 2007).

Teachers who implement assessment to share with their students can improve student thinking (Lee & Abell, 2007, p. 66). Feedback helps students to analyze the positives and negatives in their work and understand how to further achievement (Sadler, as cited in Lee & Abell, 2007). Teacher feedback that focuses on student improvement can support an expectation of success for all (Black & Williams, 1998). Bergan, Sladeczek, Schwarz, and Smith (as cited in Lee & Abell, 2007) reported higher
achievement in classrooms where teachers used assessments to inform and differentiate instruction.

Despite these benefits, formative assessment remains underused in many classrooms (Marsh, 2007). Fair Test Examiner (as cited in Marsh, 2007) concludes that the state of formative assessment is quite weak. Marsh (2007) adds that most cultures praise students who attain achievement, but give less attention to the process consisting of perseverance, critical thinking, problem-based learning, and self-learning.

**Implementing Effective Formative Assessment Strategies**

The NRC (2001) explains that formative assessment helps teachers understand and share their prior knowledge with students, misunderstandings, learning difficulties, and knowledge/skill development and adjust their teaching to meet students’ needs. Assessment and feedback can improve student achievement and inform teachers about their instruction (Black & Williams, as cited in Lee & Abell, 2007, p. 67). They offer a few suggestions for improving formative assessment in elementary science classrooms:

1) Focus on what students want to learn, establish goals with students, and monitor progress.

2) Design a variety of formative assessments.

3) Develop some type of formative assessment in each lesson.

4) Listen and observe how students share what they have learned.

5) Use results of the formative assessment to plan future lessons.
Researchers claim that proficient readers use prior knowledge to check the correctness of meaning and to store knowledge with other memories (Madison School District, n.d.). One way to activate prior knowledge is through an extended anticipation guide. Conrad (1999) claims the purpose of an anticipation guide is to help readers activate their own knowledge and to realize focus of expository texts. By responding to an extended anticipation guide, readers become engaged in reading and are motivated to read as a way of enhancing or modifying their prior knowledge about the content of the text. Checking background knowledge helps readers to recall important ideas and to expect the internal organization of different types of reading material. Readers who make connections are more likely to make appropriate inferences for text ideas that are not explicitly stated. Charting strategies for activating background knowledge is crafted to readers with the existing background knowledge for analyzing a passage and a way of framing their thinking for future reading. A *yes statement* shares an idea in the paragraph/passage that a reader knows about. Students also can use this chart to make connections to the book. Proficient readers use their schema when they are reading and making connections with the text they are reading between their background knowledge and experiences.

A third way to activate schema is through talking drawings (McConnell, 1992, 1993). A teacher asks students to let their drawings show their background knowledge by drawing a picture that shows everything they know about the subject. Once everyone has
their schema represented in their drawings, students share their drawings. The students look for differences and similarities between their drawings.

Reading is an active process of constructing meaning by connecting old knowledge with new information (Pearson, Roehler, Dole, & Duffy, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.). New information is learned and remembered best when it is integrated with relevant prior knowledge. Good readers use prior knowledge to make predictions, visualize, ask questions to monitor comprehension, draw inferences, and confirm hypothesis. Pearson et al. (as cited in Madison School District, n.d.) explain that there are three kinds of prior knowledge: 1) specific knowledge about the topic of the text, 2) general world knowledge about social relationships and casual structures, and 3) knowledge about the text’s organization (genre). Poor readers need to be taught that they already have ideas in their heads, and that they can use those ideas to help them understand what they read. Teachers can model their own thinking through read-alouds to demonstrate this concept for students.

Our brains constantly build connections based on what we experience (Caine & Caine, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.). We use past experiences to update and construct ongoing interactions. Experiences provide background for how students gain knowledge. Brooks and Brooks (as cited in Madison School District, n.d.) conclude that constructions of prior information and experiences form the basis of frameworks of thinking used to gain understanding.
Determining Most Important Ideas and Themes

Proficient readers use their conclusions about important ideas to focus their reading and omit unimportant details (Afflerbach & Johnson, as cited in Robinson et al., 2004; Baumann, as cited in Robinson et al., 2004; Tierney & Cunningham, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.; Winograd & Bridge, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.).

Successful readers are able to determine important details when reading informational texts. Less successful readers tend to group all details together with each carrying the same importance and level of comprehension. Being able to analyze important facts is important in gaining knowledge of content-area reading (Conrad, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.).

When proficient readers use what they know about text structure and their own purposes for reading, they are able to read for meaning fluently (Conrad, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.). Skimming and scanning are two techniques that allow readers to vary their reading rate. The techniques also allow readers to focus only on the most important information.

*Skimming* is reading the whole text rapidly to grasp sense of the main ideas and some of the supporting details. Skimming implies less of a focus on all the details of a text in exchange for the entire piece. The reader reads the first several paragraphs of the text to gain the idea of the content, the format, the use of informational language, etc. As reading continues, the reader reads only important sentences and phrases to understand
the main ideas. Since the final paragraphs often summarize main ideas in texts, the reader reads them even more carefully.

Scanning is the location of specific information in a text as quickly and as possible. The reader attends to the format, arrangement of information, and clue words or phrases he/she is seeking. The reader reads the surrounding information to confirm that the correct information has been found.

**Asking Questions**

Proficient readers use their questions to focus their reading (Andre & Anderson and Brown & Palinscar, both as cited in Madison School District, n.d.). Proficient readers ask questions continually while they read to check their personal meaning (Conrad, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.). Some of these are wonder questions, clarification questions, and predictive questions. No matter what the purpose, successful readers question before, during, and after their reading. Teachers can create a scaffold in teaching students to ask questions. Teachers can model questioning by stopping at regular intervals to think aloud for their students. Teachers can also teach their students to record their questions as they are reading and discuss how this questioning will aide their learning (Conrad, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.).

Another strategy that can help students with asking questions is the KWL strategy (Ogle, 1986), which helps students understand their own purpose for reading. Students will add to their knowledge base by reading to answer personal questions and
may cite further research on a topic. In this three-step procedure, K refers to What is Known, W is What The Person Wants to Know, and L is What the Person Learned. In step 1, students list what they already know about a subject. In step 2; the students write down specific questions they want to have answered. After this step, the student may read the passage. In step 3, students write down what they learned and check to see if it’s the same as what they wanted to learn.

Creating Visual and Other Sensory Images From Text

These images may include visual, auditory, and other sensory connections to the text (Madison School District, n.d.). Proficient readers use these images to further their knowledge of the passage. McConnell (1992, 1993) explains that one way to help students create sensory images is to have students draw (sketch) a picture that shows everything they know about the topic they are going to investigate. Students then share this information with their neighbor.

Conrad (as cited in Madison School District, n.d.) shares that proficient readers create pictures as they read to monitor comprehension. Readers of informational text can use to graphic organizers to enhance understanding.

Another strategy that helps students with creating visual images is stretch to sketch. Harste and Short (1986) explain that language users relate the passage they encounter to their background information and sharing this information through art can
guide the reader to new meanings. The readers sketch what the text is about, what it means to them, and what they visualized while reading.

**Drawing Inferences**

Anderson and Pearson (as cited in the Madison School District, n.d.) claim that proficient readers use their background knowledge and text information to draw conclusions, make judgments, and form their own understandings from text. Inferences may occur in the form of conclusions, predictions, or new ideas.

Readers are able to create inferences and think inferentially when they are able to connect clues in the story with their own experiences (Johnson, Carr, Dewitz, & Patberg, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.). Inferences are ongoing and produce meaningful comprehension. This strategy can help students use their background knowledge, combine it with information from the book, and develop inferences. Inferential thinking can be demonstrated first by using cloze procedures with passages. Using their background, students construct words that would make sense in the cloze blank—knowledge to fill in the blanks when the author provides no clues in the passage.

When developing cloze experiences, there are two characteristics for selecting deletions: 1) delete words that are important to understanding the passages so that readers focus on important topics and 2) delete words whose position causes readers to research passages and infer answers with previous information learned (Johnson et al., as cited in Madison School District, n.d.). It is important that readers have background knowledge
about a passage they are to read if they are able infer. If not the readers will not be able to make inferences about the text (Johnson et al., as cited in Madison School District, n.d.).

### Retelling or Synthesizing What’s Read

Proficient readers focus on the most important information and to the clearness of the synthesis to help them understand what they have read (Brown, Day, & Jones, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.). When reader/writers are stimulated to reflect on their learning, they understand the content information in new and deeper ways (Crafton, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.). Teachers can use exit slips in which students share what they have learned and areas they are still confused about.

Teachers should discuss the importance of thinking about what is learned and how people learn things (Crafton, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.). Teachers should model this to their students by highlighting their own decision making within simple context. With exit slips the teacher asks students to write one thing they learned from an activity on one side of the card. On the other side students write one question they still have. Teachers then use the questions. Teachers can answer questions orally or by written responses on the student’s card or use for future mini-lessons (Crafton, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.).
Proficient readers select appropriate fix-up strategies to best solve problems while reading (Garner, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.). Proficient readers also ask themselves, “Does it make sense? Does it sound right? Do it look right?” (Conrad, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.).

The best way teachers can help students learn this is by modeling through read-alouds (Davey, 1983; Pitts, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.). As you do so, think aloud about how you process text, construct meaning, decide what’s important, how you deal with difficulties in text, and then model this for students. Rhodes and Dudley-Marling (as cited in Madison School District, n.d.) explain that it is also helpful to have the students to help you list the strategies you used during your modeling of the read aloud.

Some students’ only strategy for dealing with unknown words is to sound them out, which leads to a habit of pronouncing nonsense words while they continue reading (Shanklin, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.). Comprehension can often be lost. Students may relinquish reading altogether. Students therefore need to learn a variety of strategies to solve unknown words. Teachers should let students work as partners to help them deal with unknown words (Shanklin, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.). A chart might be constructed by students to record words they had trouble with and which strategies they used to figure them out. Then teachers could hang these charts near her
reading table and remind students of the strategies they can use when they get stuck on a word.

Another lesson that helps students utilize fix up strategies is called Reader-Selected Miscues. Rhodes (as cited in Madison School District, n.d.) shares that this lesson is helpful for students who need to learn to ask for help with words to develop a greater range of strategies for dealing with words in context, and to learn to use judgment in deciding which words are worthwhile. Teachers should provide each student with three to five strips of paper and an explanation about what to do with them before reading the text. The students should each read the text silently, placing the paper in the text where they meet confusion. When the student has finished reading they go back to the troubled spots and on the strip write their initials and complete sentence in which the miscue was encountered. They underline the part believed to have caused the difficulty, and note the page number the problem happened on. The teacher collects all the strips from the students and organizes them according to similarity of words and difficulties. Then the teacher selects a category that caused difficulty for a number of students and prepares them for discussions by writing them on the board. Individually, the teacher should include the page number and the students name next to each selected sentence and focus on miscue patterns. The teacher reveals the sentence with the miscue and asks the students to discuss why they think the miscue caused the difficulty. Finally, the teacher needs to encourage students to refer back to the passage to see if other clues to the
meaning of the sentence exist in other sentences around it (Rhodes, as cited in Madison School District, n.d.).

**Impact of NCLB or Standardized Testing on Classroom Instruction**

*What Does Teaching to the Test Mean?*

Although many use the phrase, educators need to understand exactly what *teaching to the test* means. If a teacher directs instruction toward the body of knowledge or skills that a test represents, that instruction teaches the knowledge or skills represented by a test. But if a teacher uses the actual test items in classroom activities the teacher is engaging in a different kind of teaching (Popham, 2001). Popham (2001) refers to teaching that is focused directly on test items as *item-teaching*. He refers to teaching that is directed at the curriculum content (knowledge or skills) represented by test items as *curriculum teaching*. In item teaching, teachers organize instruction around the actual items found on a test. Curriculum teaching, however, requires teachers to focus on a specific body of content knowledge represented by a given test. In curriculum teaching, a teacher focuses instruction at test-represented content rather than at test items.

When people talk about teaching to the test, they mean teachers should try to focus on particular questions to help students do better (Popham, 2004). When students who have been item-taught do well (or poorly) we don’t learn how well those students have mastered the aims shown by the test. Students who have been item-taught may score high on a frequently practiced test, but they haven’t mastered what that test shows.
Teachers who item-teach, therefore, have misleading overestimates of how their students have learned. To avoid confusion of this phrase, educators should say either “teaching toward a specific test’s items” or “teaching toward the curricular aim represented by the test” (Popham, 2004).

**What’s Wrong With Teaching to the Test?**

The purpose of most educational testing is to make accurate inferences about how much students have learned with respect to a body of knowledge. If test results are valid the teacher can make instructional plans about which students need additional help. If curriculum-teaching is effective, students have mastery of the skill and perform well on tests. If a teacher teaches to the test, valid test-based interpretations become impracticable (Popham, 2001).

In many states the quality of public education and competence of its teachers is being measured by students’ scores on standardized achievement tests. Teachers in schools and districts whose scores fail to improve are looked down upon. Schools may be closed and districts taken over by the state. Those against high-stakes testing complain that such pressure causes teachers to devote all classroom time to prepare for the test. Those for the test explain that teachers should focus most of class time toward preparation for the test (Posner, 2004).
How Does the Public Feel About Standardized Testing?

The public has favored standardized testing and consequences in schools (especially parents) based on poll results several decades ago (Phelps, 2006, p. 19). Those for high-stakes standardized testing outnumber those opposed. Nearly all Americans would like to see high-stakes tests administered at least once a year (Phelps, 2006, p. 19). Despite this, most school districts offer just one or two standardized tests with high stakes in elementary and secondary school. Therefore, U.S. educational testing programs are not fulfilling the needs of public interest (Phelps, 2006).

What Do Critics Say About Standardized Testing?

There is universal acceptance that there are problems with NCLB and needs fixing (Houston, 2007, p. 744). Adding more money or incorporating flexibility will not fix the problems of the law. You can’t get something designed for one purpose and expect to be effective at fulfilling a different purpose. The flaws in the law are too deep (Houston, 2007, p. 744).

Houston (2007) lists “Seven Deadly Sins” of No Child Left Behind: 1) it measures success by testing skills appropriate for an agricultural/industrial economy, not those required in a global information economy; 2) it conflates testing with education; 3) it ignores socioeconomic differences among children and schools, which are inextricably linked to school performance; 4) it replaces motivation as a strategy with fear and coercion; 5) it is unclear and holds children of varying skill levels to a single standard; 6)
it substitutes the judgment of government bureaucrats for that of teachers; and 7) it harms our international competitiveness by focusing on basic skills, not the higher-order skills needed to compete in a global economy.

If tests were prohibited, teachers will no longer be victims of the test. If tests are used as something to focus on, teachers can focus their instruction on what they need to learn (Popham, 2001, p. 20).

Tests and their administration won’t ever be perfect, but abandoning them isn’t the answer either (Phelps, 2006, p. 25). One consequence of getting rid of standardized testing is a system of social promotion with many levels of the same subject matter, ranging from classes for the self-motivated students to those for the students who give up (Phelps, 2006, p. 25). A second consequence of getting rid of high-stakes standardized testing is that colleges would have to adjust for any deficiencies of instruction from previous schooling. A third consequence could be a gap of dependable information on student achievement outside a student’s own school district. Getting rid of high-stakes standardized testing would increase schools’ dependence on teacher grading and testing, which are far more likely to be nongeneralizable than any standardized test. Individual teachers can reduce the curriculum to what they prefer. Grades can be inflated as students learn what teachers are looking for and how to manipulate their opinions (Phelps, 2006). If the curriculum is not tested, it is difficult to know if it works. Without standardized tests, it is hard for those other than teachers to check on students learning (Phelps, 2006).
Nurturing Lifelong Learning

Learning is a process in which we develop meaning from student interactions with their environments. This process is shaped by different factors and learning modalities of the student (Virtue, 2007, p. 243). Participating in the 21st century demands that individuals be effective lifelong learners. Productive teachers promote lifelong learners through intellectual curiosity, respectful skepticism, looking at alternate perspectives, and reflection. Students who satisfy their curiosity and grow intellectually are instrumental in advancing the requisite knowledge, attitudes, and abilities for effective, lifelong learning (Virtue, 2007).

“To make students lifelong learners, we must encourage students to take ownership of their own learning” (Wolk, 2007, p. 653). By allowing students some control over their learning, teachers can respect their students’ strengths (Wolk, 2007, p. 653). A lifelong reader is a lifelong learner. Schools reduce or get rid of practices that teach children that reading is laborious. Students should be immersed in reading critical and relevant books.

The ability to learn is a skill that accels students into the future toward success. Students will have 10 to 14 different careers in their lifetimes (Boytes, 2005, p. 24). An engineer trains for four years at a university, but within two years of graduation, up to 60% of what he or she learned is obsolete (Jukes, as cited in Boyes, 2005). In biotechnology and medicine half of the information is out of date within 10 to 12 months (Boytes, 2005, p. 24).
One of the best ways to help students become lifelong learners is for teachers to model it themselves (Boyes, 2005). Sprinthall and Theis-Sprinthall (as cited in Boyes, 2005, p. 24) explain that teachers are the only professionals who remain at the same levels through their professional careers. Boyes (2005) suggests two ways teachers can show their students they are lifelong learners:

1) Model or demonstrate that you are a lifelong learner by letting students see your excitement in learning new information and the content you teach.

2) Search for new and better ways to do activities and strive for improvement and growth.

Kirk and Riedle (2005) share that service learning gave their students opportunities to develop skills for lifelong learning and volunteerism while incorporating curriculum into real-world experiences. The students learned that having a purpose could help them become positive and active members participants in their communities. Students mentioned that working with community members was a memory that will stay with them their entire lives. Useful skills learned during service learning included listening, communication, problem solving, using resources, and building relationships with peers and community members (Kirk & Riedle, 2005). As instructors, Kirk and Riedle (2005) saw new sides of their students not seen in traditional coursework. Taking responsibility for whole projects, working in teams, collaborating and caring with community members, budgeting, problem-solving, and planning are skills that are vital but hard to teach in a regular classroom.
Teachers’ Awareness of Pedagogical Knowledge and Philosophical Orientations

It is very difficult to describe what good teaching means, often because teachers have to apply knowledge from multiple domains to their own classroom practices (Toh, Ho, Chew, & Riley, 2003, 2004, p. 200). Shulman (as cited in Toh et al., 2003, 2004) explains that among these domains are knowledge of pedagogy, knowledge of learners, subject-matter knowledge (SMK), and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK).

Teachers often know how to present information in a manner in which students can understand it (Toh et al., 2003, 2004). The very important part of teacher knowledge is when one goes from developing one’s own comprehension to preparing for the comprehension of others (Shulman, as cited in Toh et al., 2003, 2004, p. 200). Therefore, only when teachers understand something themselves are they able to teach it to others. Teachers need to master any obstacles that could impede students’ access to knowledge and real-world experiences. The teacher must have both SMK and PCK (Shulman, as cited in Toh et al., 2003, 2004).

Developing a powerful teaching repertoire is part of pedagogical reasoning—the process of transforming subject-matter knowledge into figures that are pedagogically significant (Shulman, 1987 as cited in Even, 1993) and depends on strengthening subject-matter knowledge, on the integration of different realms of learning (Ball, as cited in Even, 1993). All teachers possess a wealth of knowledge that informs their classroom practices (Goodnough, 2006); in recent years, this knowledge has been referred to as
practical knowledge (Carter, as cited in Goodnough, 2006) or craft knowledge (Grimmett & Mackinnon, as cited in Goodnough, 2006). Van Driel, Verloop, and De Vos. (as cited in Goodnough, 2006) see craft knowledge as information and beliefs that direct “teachers’ actions in practice” and are held in reference to curriculum, subject matter, students and pedagogy (p. 674).

Zhou, Peverly, and Xin (2006) define this as pedagogical knowledge, in which knowledge of theories and principles of teaching and learning, knowledge of learners, and knowledge of principles and techniques of behavior and conduct management. In pedagogical knowledge, good teachers know more than how to teach a lesson. They know how to organize classrooms for instruction, establish an appropriate classroom climate, are proactive, and understand differences among their students (McEwan & Bull, 1991).

Teachers who have a strong pedagogical knowledge also have strong philosophical orientations for how they approach teaching. Understanding child development helps teachers understand why students behave as they do and expectations of students at that age (Bickart, Jablon, & Dodge, 1999). Child development refers to the patterns of change that happen as children grow. Social development discusses how students relate to others. Emotional development narrates feelings about self and others. Cognitive development explains how the student thinks, processes information, solves problems, and communicates. Physical development includes growth occurring in size, strength, and motor skills (Bickart et al., 1999).
Curriculum is considered age-appropriate when it is based on how most children grow and what they can do—socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically—at a set stage of development (Bickart et al., 1999). Knowledge helps teachers to execute classroom activities that are appropriate to students’ developmental abilities. It helps teachers to anticipate students’ behavior and have reasonable expectations of student responses. Although we can look at each aspect of development separately, all areas of development are connected. By knowing the developmental characteristics of students, teachers can figure how to sustain each student’s growth and achievement (Bickart et al., 1999).
CHAPTER 3: QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Focus of the Study

The focus of this study was an understanding of the experiences of three high school teachers who taught reading in the content areas. Because research suggests that content-area teachers often resist the recommended practice of incorporating reading skills into their instruction, the research explored the practices of content-area teachers who reported that they did incorporate reading into their instruction. Its goal was to identify commonalities and differences among the teachers' experiences. Because this study sought to understand the lived world of educators who teach reading in the content areas, the researcher determined that qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were best suited to the aims of the study.

Phenomenological Perspective

The study is a qualitative phenomenological case study of reading in the content area focusing on one rural high school and involving three teachers. According to Creswell (1998), a phenomenological study describes the meaning that individuals derive from their experiences of a perspective or phenomenon. It is based on the premise that, prior to all interpretations and theorizations, human experience makes sense to those who live it. The reader of a phenomenological study should come away with the feeling that “I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that” (Polkinghorne, as cited
in Creswell, 1998, p.55). Consequently, this study took a phenomenological stance within a case study design because this approach seemed likely to capture the experiences of individuals who teach reading in the content areas.

**Case Study Design**

Merriam (1988), Yin (1989), and Stake (1994) all describe case studies as detailed examinations of one or more setting(s) or one or more individual(s) (see also Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). A case study is an exploration of a *bounded system* (i.e., a case) over time through detailed and in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and providing rich contextual descriptions (Creswell, 1998). According to methodologists who write about case studies, researchers who use this method continually modify the details of their research designs as they learn more about the phenomena they intend to study. Eventually, case study researchers narrow their data collection and research activities to particular sites, subjects, materials, topics, questions, and themes.

Creswell (1998) claims that a case study is an in-depth exploration of several sources of data gathered in context over time. Viewing interviews as an essential method for case study research, Rubin and Rubin (2005) maintain that the purpose of such studies is to find out what happened, why, and what it means more broadly. Many researchers believe that findings from case studies can be used to acquire insights about general processes and even about cause and effect relationships.
In keeping with the case study approach, this study focused on the experiences of three high school teachers, all employed in the same rural school and who had indicated that they taught reading in content-area lessons at least to some degree.

**Site Selection**

The site was selected as a matter of convenience. The researcher is a full-time teacher, and she was unable to leave her job in order to conduct research at a school other than the one where she is employed. Although conducting a case study in her place of employment posed some challenges and also introduced some threats to the study’s validity, it also provided some benefits. The researcher had taught in the school system for 11 years and was acquainted with the participants, but she did not know them personally because she taught at the elementary level and they taught at the secondary level. Because the participants knew who the researcher was, however, they may have felt more comfortable with her than they might have felt with a stranger. Therefore they were not reluctant to allow her to interview and observe them.

Although the site has unique characteristics, it also shares characteristics with other rural schools. Like other rural schools, the school that participated in the study served a low-income community with a concentration of low-wage jobs, high unemployment, few educational resources, and low levels of education among residents (e.g., Roscigno & Crowley, 2001).
Gaining Access and Selecting Participants

The researcher gained entry to the site by calling the district superintendent to explain the study's purpose, value, and procedures. After winning support from the superintendent, the researcher discussed the study with the high school principal, informing her of the details of the study and requesting her support.

After obtaining support from the superintendent and principal, the researcher distributed a questionnaire to all the teachers in the school with a cover letter explaining the study (see Appendix G). The questionnaire included items to determine the extent to which teachers incorporate reading into instruction in their content areas. A question also asked teachers if they were willing to participate in the study by allowing the researcher to observe in their classrooms and interview them. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to 54 teachers and received 29 responses (53%). Some teachers reported that they did not teach reading in the content area; others declined to participate in the study. From those teachers remaining, the researcher selected three at random in order to ensure that the selection was not influenced by her own personal judgment. The teachers who were selected included two females and one male; all were Caucasian. The researcher sent letters to these teachers as well as a copy to the principal to let her know who would be interviewed and observed (see Appendices O and P).
Data Collection

Data were collected in two ways in this study: 1) interviews and 2) observations.

Interviews

After the three teachers had been selected, the researcher sent each a letter to gain permission to conduct interviews and observations (see Appendix Q). The researcher chose interviewing as the primary method for obtaining data because, as Seidman (1998) explains, interviewing provides access to the context of people’s behavior and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behavior. A basic assumption of in-depth interviewing is that the meaning people make of their experiences affects the way they act. Interviewing allows researchers to put behavior in context and understand participants’ actions.

The researcher used semi-structured interviewing. As Wengraf (2001) suggests, this approach enables respondents to describe their experiences in their own words, and it also gives the researcher some latitude to modify the interview questions in response to the narrative generated by respondents (see also Dearnley, 2005). In other words, semi-structured interviewing is an open process, allowing for responsiveness and improvisation. At the same time, semi-structured interviewing ensures that researchers obtain data capable of being compared across respondents or sites (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).
The researcher waited until late in the school year to interview respondents to ensure that the teachers would not be rushed or stressed by the pressure of preparing their students for the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT). The researcher sent letters and made telephone calls to the three teachers chosen to be in the study in order to set up interviews with them. In the letter, she thanked them for their willingness to participate and provided information about how the interview would proceed. The researcher also allowed her interviewees to pick a convenient time and location for the interview.

When the researcher met with each participant, she discussed the central purpose and the procedures to be used for the data collection. She reviewed the consent form, explaining procedures to keep information confidential and to assure the participant's anonymity. The researcher explained confidentiality, listing the information that would remain confidential and information that would be shared with others. The researcher explained how the data would be recorded, transcribed, and stored. She also told the interviewees that they would receive a small token for their time. She explained that the volunteers had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. After explaining these matters, the researcher asked the participants to sign the consent form (see Appendix S).

The researcher used an interview guide (see appendix T) with a list of questions that were developed in reference to relevant literature and the study's research questions. The researcher followed Wengraf’s (2001) model of using open-ended questions, follow-up questions, and probes in order to elicit rich data as well as to balance note taking with active listening. This approach allows the researcher to remain sufficiently flexible to
accommodate new information. In other words, the researcher responds to what she hears by creating additional questions to elicit more complete explanations or other relevant information (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

The researcher tried to be attentive, reflective, and engaged, following Keats' (1988) advice to continually monitor respondents' verbal and nonverbal communication and modify one’s own behaviors to ensure that the interaction proceeds smoothly.

The researcher interviewed each respondent three times. Each of the interviews was approximately 30 minutes in length. After reviewing the data from these interviews, the researcher realized that she hadn’t collected enough information from one of the respondents and she conducted a fourth, 90-minute interview with her to gain more information. Because there was a time lapse of approximately seven months (including a three-month summer break) between the initial interviews and the fourth interview, the researcher had time to reflect on the earlier interviews. Although the interviewer would have liked to use a constant-comparative analysis method and thereby continue interviewing until data saturation had been achieved, practical considerations made that impossible. This limitation perhaps compromises the accuracy of the interpretative themes derived through data analysis.

The researcher took handwritten notes of the participants’ comments and follow-up questions to ask as well. Notes taken during the interview helped the interviewer formulate new questions, as the interview moved along (see e.g., Patton, 1990). The researcher also tape recorded each interview and created a verbatim transcription from
the tape. After transcribing each interview, the researcher reviewed the interview transcript. She also sent each participant a thank-you letter that contained a few follow-up questions as well as an offer to send a copy of the transcript for the interviewee to review and correct or clarify. (Two of the teachers requested transcripts, and none responded with added information.)

Classroom Observations

Although interviews can provide relevant insights, interviewees can bias data by giving responses based on what they think the researcher wants to hear. To ensure the data were not biased in this way, the researcher also conducted observations.

Observations are important because the researcher can see firsthand the daily practices of a teacher. The researcher can check to see if what is being reported is actually what is being done. The frame of reference guiding what the researcher was looking for during observations came from previous research about teachers who claim to teach reading in their content-area classrooms (e.g., Diamantes, 1982; Edwards, 1979; Hook & Rosenshine, 1979; Madden, 2000).

Observations were conducted over a three-month period during the hours of 7:40-8:10 a.m. The researcher conducted 18 classroom observations overall, in other words, six observations of each of the three teachers. The researcher recorded her observations in handwritten fieldnotes, and later typed up after each day’s observations.
The researcher helped make sense of her observations using the Content Area Reading (CAR) Observation Checklist developed by Grierson (1966; see Appendix Y). Items on the observation checklist had been derived from prior research and the authors’ experience, and they related to practices taking place prior to reading activities, during reading activities, and after reading activities.

The field notes developed by the researcher provided detailed description of the classroom space, lighting, and arrangement. A rich detailed description of the physical setting was important to this study because it enabled the researcher to provide the readers of her study with sufficient information to visualize the teachers and their classrooms. The researcher also included in field notes sketches of each classroom, descriptions of the students in the class, and details about the progression of instructional events in each class session that she observed.

**Data Analysis**

The researcher read the interview and observation transcripts in their entirety several times to get a sense of the whole before engaging in systematic analysis to identify emergent themes. The researcher developed initial codes by using the themes that emerged from the transcripts after she read them. The researcher drew a bracket around each theme and labeled it with the name of the theme to the right side of the

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1 Grierson’s instrument is a modified version of the Kersh-Hamlin Problem-Solving Observation Schedule.
margin. Then the researcher wrote each theme out on index cards with the relevant quotes and page numbers of the interviews they were taken from and grouped all of the quotes of each theme together with rubber bands. Next the researcher laid these index cards out and put them in order to develop a story about each teacher and their experiences. These were later used to type up case studies of each teacher. Then the researcher read over the information from each of the case studies to determine similarities and differences among the 3 teachers. These experiences and comments were organized into charts to help the researcher draw conclusions from her findings. Finally, a long paragraph was written in which the researcher wrote out her own perception and full description of teaching reading in the content areas.

Codes are labels for assigning units of meaning to the information developed during the study. Codes usually are attached to “chunks” of varying size-words, phrases, etc., attached to a specific setting. They can take the form of a straightforward label or something like a metaphor. Coding is analysis. To review a set of field notes and to analyze them meaningfully, while keeping the relations between the parts, is analysis. This part of analysis involves how you combine and discriminate the data you have and the reflections you made about it. It is the meaning that matters (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A word does not “contain” its meaning as a bucket “contains” water, but has the meaning it does by its significance in a given context (Bliss, Monk, & Ogborn, as cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). The challenge is to be mindful of the purposes of your study and of the your conceptual lenses while being open to things you didn’t expect to
find. At the same time the researcher will have to be cautious about being overwhelmed by an overload of data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

**Limitations**

A limitation of the study was that the researcher was not able to engage in persistent observation for an extended time in the field, due to working as a full-time teacher. Even though the researcher teaches in the same school district and has some capital, she teaches in a separate building and she had to establish trust and learn the culture of the school through the interviews she conducted and through the time she was able to establish rapport with teachers in the field through the 3-month observation period. She does not teach directly with the participants because she is an elementary teacher and in a separate building than the high school teachers. At the beginning of the study the teachers and staff were standoffish, but the teachers warmed up to the researcher after the first couple of weeks of observations and after the first round of interviews were conducted.

**Validity**

Validity is when the meanings emerging from the data have to be tested for their plausibility, their sturdiness, their “confirmability” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 11). The researcher performed this in the study during the development of themes through the process of coding. When the researcher made a statement on notecards, she provided
evidence through quotes from interviews and field note observations. After the researcher typed up all the information from the index cards in a story format, the researcher continued to add quotes from interviews and observation field notes, including dates. That helped the researcher be honest in reporting only what she saw or heard from the participants in her study. When the researcher developed case studies on each teacher she was able to use these narratives with quotes and observation notes to construct true statements about each teacher.

When the researcher developed themes from interviews, she also incorporated information she saw during classroom observations, because self-reporting is less valid as data that is collected through observations (Hook & Rosenshine, as cited in Coyne, 1981).

The researcher also ensured validity in her study by recording all her interviews on cassette tapes to confirm what she had written in her notes of the interview. She listened to the tapes after each interview and played them over to answer any questions she had about what the interviewee said. She then conducted member checks by sharing interview transcripts with the interviewees to make sure the researcher represented them and their ideas accurately. This provided credibility to her study since it was conducted in a manner as to ensure subjects were accurately identified and described.

A study may be judged as auditable (and thus reliable) if the researcher can follow the decision trail or audit trail of the research process (Guba & Lincoln, as cited in Powers & Knapp, 1990). Auditability was attempted in this study by clearly describing
each stage of the research process, explaining and justifying what was done, and why. It is possible that the researcher’s bias was present because she is a teacher. However, she tried to overcome this by maintaining a neutral stance and not presenting her own preconceptions during data collection.

Subjectivity

What does a researcher do about her opinions, prejudices, and other biases and their effect on data? Bogdan & Biklen (1998) argue that qualitative researchers attempt to objectively study the subjective states of their subjects. While the idea that researchers can transcend some of their own biases may be difficult to accept at the beginning, the method researchers use aids this process. As we try to make sense of our social world and give meaning to what we do as researchers, we continually raise awareness of our own beliefs. There is no attempt to pretend that research is value-free (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Prior to the interviews, the researcher wrote a full description of her experiences from those of the interviewees, to help her be aware of her own views so she did not add bias to her interviewees’ experiences. The purpose of the self-examination was for the researcher to gain clarity from her own preconceptions. Douglass (1985) shares that the interviewer must recognize his own humanity as the beginning of the understanding of all human beings. He does not hide his humanity, nor does he flaunt it. He tries to understand himself as the beginning of understanding anyone else. The researcher
described the meaning of the experience for herself, which was the lens that guided her through the research as the primary instrument. It was her job to help others see, hear, and experience reality as the participants did. The researcher’s personal experiences and insights were an important part of the inquiry and critical to understanding the phenomena.

**Conclusion**

This research showed how a qualitative phenomenological study in a rural high school could be conducted. A qualitative framework was chosen because it refers to research, lived experiences, behaviors, and feelings. This was important because a phenomenological study looks at people's lived experiences. This was done through a case study of 3 teachers in a single rural high school. Interviews were chosen as a method because the researcher wanted to investigate the subjects' lived experiences; because some research questions the use of self-reports, the researcher also choose to do observations. Observations were important because the researcher was able to see the daily practices of the teacher. Overall, a qualitative framework was helpful in showing the socially constructed nature of reality and the situational constraint that shapes inquiry.
CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The study used qualitative methods to investigate the practices of 3 rural high school teachers who incorporated reading as part of their instruction in the academic content areas of mathematics, science, and social studies. This chapter presents the findings of the study. It first provides portraits of each of the content-area teachers who participated in the study, revealing their individual approaches to the teaching of reading. The chapter then presents the cross-case analysis in which data from all 3 teachers are examined to determine similarities and differences in their approaches to the teaching of reading. Common patterns in the experiences of these teachers represent the emergent themes induced through qualitative data analysis.

Case Studies of Three Teachers

The researcher provides portraits of the 3 teachers as a way to present information providing insight into their approaches to content-area reading. All of the teachers work at the same small high school (grades 9–12) in a rural community in southeast Ohio.
Kelli: A Teacher of Mathematics

Background

Kelli received her teaching license and bachelor’s degree in mathematics from Dupler University in Indianapolis. In college she took math and education courses exclusively and no courses in content-area reading. She completed 15 weeks of student teaching at Big City High School in fall 2003, teaching precalculus and remedial math to the lowest-functioning students. After completing student teaching, Kelli worked as a substitute teacher for the remainder of the 2003–04 school year.

When she was working in an inner-city environment, Kelli’s main goal was to inspire her students to do homework, take notes, and learn as much as they could. Kelli focused on how students learn so they can apply their knowledge to other content areas and other kinds of problems. According to Kelli, her position in the inner-city school was completely different from her current teaching position because the students in the urban school had so many struggles outside the classroom. For example, some inner-city students worked after school until 11 p.m. and never completed their homework assignments. As a result, Kelli felt compelled to reduce the number of homework assignments because her goal was to help the students.

At the time of this study, Kelli was completing her third year of teaching at Small High School. Since Kelli’s second year, she has taught 3 of the 4 upper-level courses in the high school: algebra II, precalculus, and calculus. She coaches 3 sports and usually leaves right after school to get to sporting events.
Kelli’s experiences at Big City High School and Small High School enabled her to make comparisons between schools in urban and rural environments. According to Kelli, the major difference is the character of her relationship with the students; she finds it easier to get to know and become friendly with students in the rural school. Kelli admitted she could not imagine the life of an urban student. According to Kelli, even the worst situations in rural areas, students still had homes. Kelli grew up in a rural area with loving parents. She participated in softball and basketball when she was in school.

**Relationships With Students**

Observation and interview data provided revealed that Kelli maintained good rapport with her students. For example, Kelli said, “I get letters … [from them saying], ‘Thank you for helping me.’” She also attended their sporting events. After graduation, some students come back to visit her. “I just develop a little bit different of a bond [with different students],” she said. Kelli had an easygoing manner and often laughed and joked with students. Kelli understood that not all educators would endorse her approach: “I know some people think that’s bad. They do not think you should be sarcastic and joking, but that is me. That is my personality.” Moreover, she did not joke with all her students because she knew that some might take it the wrong way.

Kelli also had more serious conversations about issues related to school. Kelli said she does not encourage students to talk about such matters, but they do anyway. She said the majority of students who confided in her about school concerns were athletes.
She attributed their candor to the fact that she has gotten to know these students outside the classroom. Her interaction with them in less formal environments enabled her to develop a closer relationship with them. Kelli explained, “It is like an older sister relationship.” They knew she wanted what is best for them.

**Teaching Style**

Kelli constantly tried to improve her teaching and help her students. “I always think, ‘What could I do differently?’ and I change every single time.”

Kelli thinks this every time she teaches a concept she always takes notes of what did and did not work. Her teaching method included lectures and differentiated instruction to cover as much material and help as many students as possible in a 40-minute class period. Kelli provided completed examples for students to use if she is busy with another student. Therefore she allots one-on-one class time with students every class period. If her students still did not understand the problem, they could wait for her to help them. This promoted cooperative learning and allowed Kelli to do small-group intervention while others worked individually.

Kelli’s teaching style was very interactive; she walked around a lot checking on students, answering students’ questions, and following up to see if they needed any more help. For lower-level students, Kelli provided hands-on materials to help them make connections with their prior experience and learn in concrete ways. She also tried to find the best worksheet to teach each lesson, drawing on a stockpile of resources collected
from her own high-school and college days and from colleagues. Kelli also provided after-school intervention for struggling students.

Kelli encouraged all her students to go to college. She encouraged students to complete various projects to explain particular math topics they are studying. Kelli also modeled her calculus class after a real college course by using a syllabus and college textbook. She helped her students prepare for tests by pointing out things students would face on the ACT. To help students prepare for the Advanced Placement Calculus Test, Kelli used activities from the book *Cracking the AP Exam* and gave them the practice test. By exposing her students to these types of questions, she hoped they would start to think about how to solve problems. Kelli didn’t just encourage her students to pass the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT); she encouraged them to pass the test at an accelerated or advanced level. Kelli’s students scored well on the OGT, with 83% passing, including students with an individualized education plan (IEP). This was the first try for most students and none of Kelli’s algebra II students had multiple tries. (These students don’t take the test until their sophomore year). She sought out textbooks that offered the best information for her students, with a preference for texts that review and break down information. She also liked to provide problems that reflect real-life situations.

Kelli was frustrated by the lack of parent involvement in education. When Kelli caught two students cheating in an upper-level course, she thought the parents would discipline their children, but both parents accused her of lying. Kelli said this incident was very distressing because she gives so much of her own time to her students. Her busy
schedule has caused Kelli to delay starting on a master’s degree in administration from an online university or from Heath University until fall or winter. Kelli is pursuing a master’s in administration because she wants to be an athletics director.

**Content-Area Reading**

Kelli believed that everyone is responsible for teaching reading. Although she acknowledged that elementary teachers prepare students for junior high and junior-high teachers prepare students for high school, Kelli claimed that many high school students still do not know how to read properly and need to learn how to skim material to find answers.

The researcher observed Kelli teaching reading two times by showing her students strategies to understand word problems, such as color coding and underlining what is important to help them set up equations while ignoring extraneous wording. Kelli claimed that she doesn’t teach reading in the content areas much: maybe one in 10 lessons, when she goes over story problems. Kelli adds that when students employ these strategies they show improvement. Kelli offered positive reinforcement to her students through praise. The researcher observed names (not the grades) of the top 5 most-improved students from each class were posted on the classroom wall, which motivated students to get good grades and improve.

Kelli shared that students who do poorly on one test can look forward to improving the next time. Kelli added that the students like to see their names on the wall.
It made them want to try to be successful. Kelli explained that she gave free homework passes and had a pizza party at the end of the year for the people that had their names on the wall the most.

**Rose: A Teacher of Science**

*Background*

Initially, Rose struggled with the decision to become a teacher. She considered becoming a missionary. Discussion with camp counselors and her missionary parents helped her see that she would be a missionary, in a sense, every day in the classroom. She could be a Christian example to students and possibly make a difference in their lives because of the way she lives.

Rose obtained her bachelor’s degree in science and chemistry from Bein College and a master’s degree in counseling from Day University. Rose taught math and science for 1 year at Centerville and taught physics, chemistry, general science, and biology for 4 years at Eastern. Rose took a 14-year break from teaching in public schools; during that time she ran a preschool from her home for 7 years, where she taught all the children to read and write.

After her 14-year break, Rose began teaching at Small High School. She has taught chemistry, physical science, chemistry II, and physics. For several years she taught integrated biology and chemistry courses; at the time of this study, Rose taught physical science, mostly to freshmen and sophomores. Physical science covers topics in physics,
chemistry, and earth science (including astronomy), as well as content focusing attention on the nature of scientific inquiry and scientific ways of thinking. Rose was advisor to the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, the tennis team, and the Teens Team. She enjoyed advising the groups because they helped her get to know her students in a different light, and vice versa.

**Relationships With Students**

Rose said parenthood made her a more empathetic and personal teacher. For example, in her first 5 years of teaching she did not have much sympathy for the student who did not complete schoolwork. Rose explained that she treated them more like objects instead of people. “I always kept the kids off, like, ‘Goodbye, sit down. Be quiet.’” After becoming a parent, she saw her students more like people and had to learn to be aware of their feelings. Her master’s work in guidance counseling also changed her approach, making her a better listener and more focused on others.

The researcher observed Rose helping her students during 3 different classroom visits. Once she was conferencing with students and the other two times she was helping students get caught up from being absent. “I help them because they need help. I help them and I give them hope. I’m not here to send them off to the ditch. I’m here to help them learn science.” Rose joined other science teachers at her school to offer students after-school help and to brainstorm ways to encourage more students to come for help.
“I’ve sent home at least 20 to 30 notes to the students’ parents to tell them to come in after school to get science tutoring so I can help them one-on-one.”

At the time of our interviews Rose shared that most students who needed the after school intervention didn’t take advantage of it. She volunteered to stay an hour after school at least one day a week but often extended those days and hours to help students. Teachers had even offered pizza, pop, cake, free transportation, etc. Out of 45 students who should have stayed, only about 10 actually did. They said they couldn’t come or they had to work. Some even opted to repeat the class because they didn’t choose to get help. They didn’t make it a priority. Many students didn’t care about their grade or passing tests and show little effort. Rose shared that the students whose parents encouraged them to come usually passed her class.

When Rose did have students stay after school, she tried to help them with their individual need by giving them practice problems. If they were behind on classwork or homework, she helped them and offered half credit. She also helped them prepare for tests by helping them study and teaching them to use self-testing. The idea was to make students accountable for their own learning. Since students didn’t do these things at home like they were supposed to, they worked on them at after-school intervention.

Sometimes, though not often, Rose spent intervention time helping students specifically on reading. When students missed comprehension questions, she reviewed the questions with the students and showed them where to look for the answer. She had them go back to the chapter and read that part again.
Rose believed she was an example of what a good teacher should be. If someone asked her students to describe Rose as a teacher, she thought they would say she made them work hard and they enjoyed her lectures. According to Rose, that would be good enough for her.

**Teaching Style**

Rose saw teaching is a vocation, not an occupation. “It’s like everything…. It’s my purpose.” It is her life and she feels she was chosen for it. “And it’s been so much fun over the years.”

Rose fulfilled her commitment as an educator by incorporating hands-on and higher-level thinking activities to help students learn better. Her approach came from research showing that students learn better and retain longer if they have a hands-on activity. For example, the researcher observed Rose’s students making models of elements in the periodic chart using beads, string, construction paper, scissors, and glue. Rose also demonstrated Newtonian physics with racecar experiments. During 7 separate classroom observations, the researcher also saw Rose incorporate visual aids to help her students. Rose explained that students will forget the content in 10 years, but they won’t forget that they took a jar and put cream in it and shook it back and forth to make butter. “My job is to teach them science, but I also have to entertain them.”
Rose incorporated math in her science class and introduced real-life situations to help motivate her students: “If you can find what they’re interested in and make it interesting to them, then that helps.”

Rose worked especially hard to prepare students for the OGT because OGT scores in science had been low in the previous year. Rose tracked state standards in her lessons and used resources such as OGT and ACT pretests. She practiced team teaching and taught test-taking strategies such as self-questioning. Some other content-area reading strategies Rose used included enrichment activities, matching definitions, prediction, prior knowledge, questioning methods, reciprocal teaching, study guides, and word maps. Rose also prepared her students by modeling writing that will be expected of them in college.

Rose required a lot of work from her students but had fun and rewarded her students with treats, praise, and encouragement. This positive reinforcement was seen or overheard by the researcher during 4 classroom observations. According to Rose, some teachers didn’t reward students but she knew some students will remember she rewarded them, especially when they were never rewarded in other classes.

Rose struggled with the daily grind of teaching: “What I’m not being good at is staying organized.” This was especially true with special-needs students. Rose used to have assistance with special-needs students, but no longer does despite greater numbers of such students. She had to write down all the assignments missed by students with IEPs so they could turn them in later, but she often did not have time to record them all.
Student motivation was a particular problem; Rose didn't like it when students gave up and dropped out of her class. “I want to try to get them to care, but that’s really hard.” She worked diligently to keep students caught up; the researcher observed Rose helping students complete back work on 5 different occasions. Compounding Rose’s concern was her belief that parental involvement was inadequate: “The parents don’t do anything about learning. So then the teacher tries to help and do as much as they can and sometimes it’s hard because it is not enough.” Like Kelli, Rose has had trouble with the parents of students who cheated.

**Content-Area Reading**

To Rose, reading in the content area involves scientific facts and trying to understand information. Her goal was for her students to not only read information, but also to understand it. Reading occupied about 15 minutes out of a 40- minute period as observed by the researcher during 5 classroom visits. Before the OGT, Rose’s students read for 40 minutes every day. Rose shared that her students were reading 50% of the time. During this time they were reading in 40-minute periods and interpreting the information they had read. They had to be able to understand what to do in labs and follow directions.

To help support students’ efforts in reading Rose did several things. She gave students questions for videos and labs ahead of time so they could read and answer questions they already knew prior to the activity. This enhanced their comprehension
because they were able to focus on unknown information during the lab or movie. She also helped students learn about the periodic table of elements by using prefixes. Although the study of prefixes usually was taught in English class, they also helped students with words in science. Rose taught students Latin and Greek words because they are the basis for the names of elements. Rose taught her students to break down and understand large words. Scientific terminology often involves compounds of three- and four-syllable words. She showed them how the word is broken down and put together.

Rose showed students the most important parts of sentences by encouraging students to highlight key words and to write summary statements to improve comprehension. Finally, Rose taught students to self-test. Students continued to review questions missed until they scored 100%.

One difficulty Rose encountered when teaching reading in the content areas was fitting it into the time needed to cover her science curriculum. “I care [about reading], but I don’t care enough to take [time] out of the class from the other things that we need to cover.” Rose felt it is the reading teacher’s job, as well as that of parents and siblings, to help children learn to read.

John: A Teacher of Social Studies

Background

John obtained his bachelor’s degree in history with a minor in general science from Rider University. He received his master’s degree in social sciences with a major in
history and a minor in political science from Heath University. John took one reading methods class in college but said he did not remember anything from the required class. At the time of this study he taught an American history survey course to every sophomore at Small High School. When John was hired in 1988, he taught science as well. John said he became a teacher because he liked history and thought he could coach. He explained that he did not really learn to teach until he got into the classroom. He felt that the actual experience of working with kids and learning about kids was how teachers learned to teach.

John was chairman of the social studies department and was president of the teachers’ association. He also served on the state department of social studies’ Writing Assessment Team (also called the Range-Finding Committee) for the OGT. John’s job on the committee was to tell the team which answers were acceptable. As a result, John knew the test questions, but he would not tell his students the questions, as that would be cheating.

**Relationships With Students**

John saw his strengths as discipline, management, and curriculum. He thought these qualities benefited his students because his classroom was very structured and he had no discipline problems. He did not have to take time out of class to work with misbehaving students. John said he hasn’t yelled at a student in years; he didn’t have to discipline his students because they knew his expectations and were aware of his
reputation. When asked how the students know how to behave, John said he did not know, but thought it was his reputation and respect. He did not send students to the office because he did not have to; they didn’t misbehave. He liked to joke with his students, but expected them to come to class ready to learn. John also let his students talk among themselves while they completed seatwork, but not while he was teaching.

John admitted that he could improve as a teacher by becoming a little more sensitive. As he explained, sometimes he got so wrapped up in what needed to get done that he was not really concerned about how his students felt. He did not want to get involved in his students’ personal lives; he believed he was just there to teach them.

John described his relationship with his students as one characterized by mutual respect. John said he did not worry if his students liked him or not because he was not there to be their friend. John explained he did not believe he needs to be warm and fuzzy; his job is to teach. The students knew the rules, but also were comfortable talking with John about their views. John expressed the belief that teachers need to be fair and let kids know up front what is expected. John thought of himself as fair, firm, and consistent.

**Teaching Style**

John’s paramount aim was to increase students’ learning. John said his job was to teach his students the curriculum, thereby enabling them to pass the OGT. At the beginning of the year John used the lecture-drill-repeat method even though he preferred a more project-based method in which students were more actively involved. John
explained that despite his preferences, he needed to use direct instruction in order to get through the curriculum in time. John was methodical and organized, mapping out his entire curriculum day by day leading up to the OGT. John explained that he spent hundreds of hours in the summer researching all the state benchmarks and grade-level indicators for the state to organize both the freshman and sophomore curricula so they would be aligned with the OGT.

While mastery of the curriculum was important, John also believed it was his responsibility to boost students’ confidence regarding their ability to pass the OGT. Part of his strategy was psychological: he told his students the test would be a piece of cake and the easiest test they had ever taken in their lives. He explained that if students went into a test thinking they were going to whip it right off the bat, their chances of success were greater.

In an effort to further improve students’ chances, John taught test-taking strategies. For example, he taught students to use a process of elimination for multiple-choice tests and to think through a problem while questioning each answer for short-answer questions. For the extended-response questions, he taught his students to use 4 bullet points instead of writing a paragraph because brevity and accuracy were key features of a good response. John also voluntarily prepared all sophomores, including those with IEPs, for the social studies part of the OGT. John said he wanted to work with the special-needs students because he thought he could do a better job teaching them the curriculum because he was the specialist in this area. In his view, the role of the
intervention specialist was to modify materials (such as reading an assignment out loud),
monitoring students’ grades, and determining if the IEP students needed additional help.

John surveyed students about his focus on the OGT; most liked it and said they
felt prepared for the OGT. In fact, 22 out of 25 students said they thought they would
pass the OGT. And indeed, about 86% of his students passed the OGT in June 2006—
57% of the IEP students and more than 90% of the regular students.

Once the OGT was over, John modeled higher-level thinking activities and
cooperative learning. For example, John has had his class debate *Roe vs. Wade* and based
students’ grades on the reasoning of their responses instead of on the actual content of
what they said during the debate. During such activities, students often struggled to come
up with ideas or wanted guidance from John. John explained, “I’ll say, ‘Well, this is the
topic, you figure it out,’ and they’ll struggle. I see nothing wrong with kids struggling. In
the beginning, you don’t want them to fail, but you need them to struggle.” Through these
activities John’s students also learned to be creative and to exercise their own thinking.

Like his colleagues Kelli and Rose, John reported paperwork, student motivation,
and parental involvement as the negative aspects of teaching. John had a student who
wouldn’t do any of his work and John felt he shouldn’t graduate. The parents and school
did not support John, but allowed the student to graduate—giving him a diploma John
felt he didn’t earn. John was frustrated by students who did not care about learning. He
didn’t know how to make students learn if they didn't want to learn.
Content-Area Reading

When asked whose job it is to teach reading, John said the elementary-school teachers. John said he did not teach reading, he did not know how elementary teachers taught reading, and he would not know how to teach reading. When John was asked what his students would say about how he taught reading in his classroom, he said they would probably say he did not. He assumed his students knew how to read before they came to him. John helped students when they struggled with reading in class, but not much of his day was made up of reading activities. When asked his definition of reading in the content areas, John defined comprehension as students understanding what they read. (The researcher never directly asked John what he thought was meant by “teaching students to read.”)

Cross-Case Analysis

Examination

Examination of data across cases to identify similarities and differences among the teachers pointed to 6 common practices, which represent the study’s emergent themes: (1) modeling as a technique for instruction, (2) reflection as a basis for improving instruction, (3) maintenance of good relationships with students, (4) systematic monitoring of students’ performance, (5) a desire to teach to the Ohio Graduation Examination, and (6) no desire to create students…learning was expressed or
indicated by any of the teachers. (The last theme was not verbally heard from comments by the teachers, but evolved as a theme out of all their comments taken collectively.)

**Modeling as a Technique for Instruction**

All 3 teachers used modeling—walking students through the steps of what they are to learn—to prepare students for high-stakes testing and postsecondary education. Kelli and Rose believed it was their job to help prepare their students for college, so they modeled activities in their classroom that they knew would give students the experience they needed to succeed in college. All 3 teachers felt the stress of preparing their students for something bigger and beyond their own classrooms.

Each teacher modeled various strategies to prepare students for future assessments. Kelli helped her students condense information in story problems to identify the important parts. By teaching her students English, German, Latin, and Greek words, Rose helped her students learn science better because the terms correlated to the elements on the periodic table. John taught his students to use a process of elimination on a multiple-choice test and how to answer content questions with bullets.

**Reflection as a Basis for Improving Instruction**

All 3 teachers were reflective about their practice in an effort to help students learn. As Kelli said, “I always think, ‘What could I do differently?’ and I change every single time. I’m never perfect, you know.” As part of their commitment to reflective
practice, these teachers took classes to stay current in their fields, and they passed what they learned on to their students. Rose and John had master’s degrees and Kelli was starting her master’s degree.

The teachers also reflected on ways they could help special-needs students. These teachers believed they were responsible not only for teaching such students but also for completing paperwork and preparing all course materials for them as well. Rose struggled to keep track of work that special-needs students had failed to turn in, but she allowed them to turn it in late and still receive credit for it. She explained that this approach created more work for her because she had to reassign the students’ work and write the assignments for them. Rose and John dealt with students getting caught up on their work. On 5 different occasions the researcher observed Rose giving suggestions to students to get caught up on work. John sent his students to a particular place in the room to pick up their work after they had been absent. He said it was one of the toughest things to do in a 42-minute period.

As a result of their reflections, these teachers realized that students with disabilities need to have course information presented in a different format. Kelli introduced manipulatives and visual aids and had her students act out the problems. She tried different ways to get them to understand. Kelli also did the problems herself so students could check her work to see mistakes they had made. All the teachers chose the best resources they could find to cover state standards. Reporting on their practices, Rose and John explained that they found it difficult to motivate their students. It was hard for
them to face kids who didn’t care, and they questioned how they could make students learn if the students didn’t want to learn. Rose said it was hard if students didn't have somebody at home who cared about them. A teacher who really cared and inspired them to care could be like a mentor or substitute parent to them.

Another focus of the teachers’ reflective practice was to make sure their lessons matched Ohio standards. Objectives were taken from the benchmarks of the OGT and then they found materials that covered the objectives. John even did his own research to gather teaching materials matched to state benchmarks and grade-level indicators. Kelli and Rose used textbooks that presented activities, provided questions, explained the material, offered pictures, and made learning interesting to help students learn the concepts that were measured by the OGT. Then they developed questions and did activities related to the book to prepare students for the test. These teachers gave up a lot of their own time over the summer or throughout the school year to ensure they covered everything in time before the big test. John explained, “I spent hundreds and hundreds of hours in the summertime organizing both the freshman and sophomore curriculum. I laid everything out, planning; it’s just like a puzzle, putting one benchmark here where this would fit with this topic, and I created units.”

Reflection led these teachers to identify one regret, which they all shared: All 3 said they had to teach by lecture, even if that method did not match their personal teaching philosophies or preferred methods, because it was the most efficient way to cover the curriculum in 6 instead of 9 months (because the OGT is administered in
March, not May). These teachers actually had less time to cover the curriculum because
they had to stop a month before the test to review previous curriculums. John explained,
“In the beginning of the year you would see a lot of lecture, discussion, classroom
interaction … because there’s a lot of content to get in there in a short period of time. I
really don’t like the lecture method, but I have to get it to them.” Most of these teachers
mapped everything they had to cover each day. They also shared their students with other
teachers and promoted cooperative learning.

**Maintenance of Good Relationships With Students**

Kelli and John maintained a good rapport with students. The students felt free to
talk to these teachers, and all 3 teachers joked with the students in their classrooms. Kelli
and John also claimed to have a handle on discipline problems, and the students knew the
teacher’s expectations.

These teachers sacrificed their own time not only for curricular planning but also
for extracurricular activities and coaching. These activities helped develop a different
relationship between teachers and students and made a difference in getting to know each
other better. Rose explained, “You really get to know and like the students better. And
they get to know and like you better. I get to know them in a different light.” Kelli and
Rose also offered their time to students after school to prepare them for achievement
tests.
All 3 teachers motivated their students, encouraging them to perform well on their classroom and achievement tests. Rose and John explicitly provided high expectations for their students’ performance, telling the students that they would pass their tests. Kelli and Rose praised students on their papers as they returned them and praised students on classroom work as they were walking around the room. Both Kelli and Rose rewarded their students for work done well. Kelli posted the names of the top 5 most-improved students and gave them free homework passes and an end-of-year pizza party. Rose distributed a piece of candy for better grades on tests and threw an end-of-the year party when test results came back.

*Systematic Monitoring of Student Performance*

All 3 teachers gave pretests to monitor their students’ progress and helped students pinpoint their weaknesses. This approach helped the teachers see if the students actually retained what they seem to have learned in class.

Depending on what these teachers perceived, they tried to help students make connections. They went more in-depth on real-life topics and applied situations to the real world. These teachers learned about students’ interests and connected lessons to their lives. Kelli and Rose incorporated other subjects into their areas to put their lessons in context and to reinforce what other teachers were doing in their classrooms. Kelli and Rose modified their teaching to help their students by finding the best worksheet or activity possible to fit the lesson. These teachers looked for new ways to teach the
material to these struggling learners. If students didn’t pass tests the first time, they offered after-school intervention to help them raise their scores on follow-up tests.

**Desire to Teach to the Ohio Graduation Test**

All 3 teachers teach to the OGT, a state-mandated test that all high school sophomores take in March of each year. The OGT is based on the state-mandated curriculum. Therefore, each of these 3 teachers was required to cover these standards in their daily classroom lessons. They used resources that would enhance their students’ learning of this information. These teachers also shared strategies with their students that they could use during the test. Since the OGT is given in early spring, these 3 teachers had less than 6 months to cover a curriculum that was usually taught in 8 months. Therefore, each teacher needed to plan and map out their lessons to make sure their content was covered in the appropriate amount of time. As a result, these 3 teachers had to teach their curriculum using the lecture-drill-repeat method, despite their own views and beliefs. They taught what is required by the state of Ohio.

**No Desire to Create a Love of Learning and Lifelong Learners**

During interviews and classroom observations, the researcher didn’t hear or see much evidence from these 3 teachers that they wanted their students to be lifelong learners or to have a love of learning. The focus was on the curriculum, instead of the
student. This focus was spurred by the state-mandated curriculum, as well as test scores that showed whether these teachers taught what they were supposed to teach.

It is important to be aware of teachers’ philosophical orientations, to help understand the reasoning behind their teaching practices. By understanding their philosophy, we can understand if their focus is on the subjects they teach or the students they teach. A teacher who focuses on students establishes a caring relationship with them. A teacher’s commitment to student success prompts him or her to look beyond subject area concepts to find ways that would help students become better learners.

On the Literacy Orientation Survey (Lenski, 1998)—which helps understand a teacher’s feelings, beliefs, and behaviors—all 3 of these teachers rated as traditional. A traditional teacher primarily uses direct instruction or views students as “vessels to be filled.” All 3 of these teachers’ belief scores were higher than their practice scores. This indicates that these teachers haven’t found a way to incorporate their constructivist beliefs into their own classrooms. “Secondary teachers, like other workers, shape their beliefs and actions in relation to the structures, policies, and traditions of the workday and the school institution” (Cuban, 1984; Cusick, 1983; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1990; Rosenholtz, 1989 as cited in O’Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995, p. 452). These structures, policies, and traditions combine to create the culture of the school (Bradberry, 2003).

The OGT stands in the way of teachers being able to teach according to their beliefs about teaching. Much importance is placed on this test from the state department of education to school administration, from the administration to teachers, and from
teachers to students. Until things change at the state level and students, not tests, are seen as the priority, teachers will continue to struggle to align their beliefs about teaching with their actual teaching practices.

**Summary**

In her student teaching experience in an inner-city high school, Kelli was less concerned with course content than with getting students interested in doing homework, taking notes, and learning as much as they could. The urban students had many struggles outside the classroom. In comparison, Kelli’s students at rural Small High School are friendlier and easier to get to know. Kelli taught 3 of the 4 upper-level courses in the high school: algebra II, precalculus, and calculus.

Rose has taught various science subjects in her career, but took a 14-year break from classroom teaching to run a preschool from her home. Rose said parenthood made her much more empathetic and personal. Her work toward a master’s degree in guidance counseling also made her a better listener and more focused on others. The daughter of missionaries, Rose approached teaching as a mission to change students’ lives.

John, who taught social studies, said he did not really learn to teach until he got into the classroom. He believed his job was to teach his students the curriculum and to get them to pass the Ohio Graduation Test. John believed in the test and even served on the state department of social studies’ Writing Assessment Team.
All 3 teachers used modeling for high-stakes testing and postsecondary education. Each modeled various strategies with their students to prepare them for future assessments. All 3 made reflections that would help students. They took classes to stay current in their field and reflected on ways they could help special-needs students. They realized these particular students needed information presented in a different format. All 3 chose the best resources to cover the state standards. Therefore, these teachers had to be flexible and reflective to meet their students’ needs and to get students to learn what they needed. All 3 teachers established good rapport with students, joking with them and serving as advisors for extracurricular activities and coaches. These activities helped develop a different relationship between teachers and students and helped them get to know each other better. All 3 motivated their students with learning, encouraging them to do well on their tests.

To monitor student comprehension, these teachers gave pretests to help students pinpoint their weaknesses. They also made special efforts to help students retain and understand material, including connecting lessons to real life and using visual aids. All 3 teachers had a desire to teach to the Ohio Graduation Test. These teachers focused all of their lessons on the state-mandated curriculum, on which the OGT is based. This curriculum is taught through a lecture-drill-repeat method. Finally, all 3 teachers had no desire to create a love of learning or lifelong learning in their students. The focus instead was on the OGT, which overshadows these teachers’ belief systems. Their beliefs and actions have been shaped by their school. Until the state changes its focus to students, not
curriculum, these teachers’ constructivist beliefs will continue to remain hidden and stagnant.
CHAPTER 5: OVERVIEW

This study was conducted to investigate how reading is taught by content-area teachers in a secondary school in a rural area. This study was significant for several reasons. First, it focused on the experiences of rural teachers, whereas most other research investigates the experiences of urban and suburban teachers. It also is significant because a great deal of prior literature suggests that content-area teachers are resistant to the idea of incorporating reading instruction into their lessons. This study, by contrast to the general finding, focused on the experiences, perspectives, and practices of three teachers who did claim to teach reading in their content areas. How and why these teachers incorporate reading into content-area instruction was explored so these practices could be shared with other educators.

Subjects

The subjects chosen for the study, Rose, Kelli, and John, have taught from 2 to 27 years. Two have master’s degrees and the other is starting hers in the summer. They teach math, science, and social studies. All the teachers think their students benefit from content-area reading, but only one had taken a course in content-area reading.

Despite the fact that they all acknowledge that they do teach reading within their content lessons, these teachers’ viewpoints about teaching reading are as different as the subject areas they teach. Rose believes it is an actual reading teacher’s job to help
students learn to read. She feels teachers in the elementary grades can make connections throughout the day because they are responsible for teaching all subject areas and have their students in their classrooms the whole day long. Kelli claims she knows teaching reading is her job too, but explains that at this level, she’s preparing her students with the content they’ll need in order to graduate and move on to college. John believes it is the primary and elementary teacher’s job to teach reading.

**Findings**

**Research Questions**

To investigate how high-school teachers in a rural area teach reading in the content areas, five research questions were used:

1. What reasons, attitudes, and beliefs exist among rural high-school teachers incorporating reading into their content-area classrooms?
2. What strategies occur in a rural high school content-area teacher’s classroom and what is their frequency?
3. What role does literacy play in high-school teachers’ classrooms?
4. Who do rural high-school teachers believe should be responsible for reading? What influences a teacher’s decision to implement literacy practices in their classroom?
5. What methods do rural high-school teachers use in their classrooms?
Research Question 1: What reasons, attitudes, and beliefs exist in rural high-school teachers incorporating reading into their content-area classroom?

The ATCAR Survey developed by Grierson (1996) was used to assess teachers’ attitudes. The survey consisted of 30 questions with response options ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” (Appendix J). Table 1 shows the teachers’ responses to these questions.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rose</th>
<th>Kelli</th>
<th>John</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Every teacher is a teacher of reading</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>The teaching of strategies for reading informational text are best taught as separate skills.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>A slower rate of reading indicates that a student is having difficulty comprehending the text.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Content reading should be assigned for a specific purpose.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>The teaching of reading should be limited to the language arts block.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Even very young students should understand how to find information in textbooks.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Preassessment of student’s interests should direct content reading instruction.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Supplementary texts or less difficult materials are needed for students who read below grade level.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Open-ended questioning techniques are effective in increasing comprehension of informational passages.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item number</td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>Kelli</td>
<td>John</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>When students revise passages of text, their comprehension increases.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Special materials are needed in order to teach students how to gain information from text.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Students should be able to choose the amount of reading that they will do for a class assignment.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Every subject area requires different reading strategies. A teacher should first introduce an informational book by discussing how it might be read most effectively.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>The modeling of reading strategies has little effect on teaching students to read content area materials. New vocabulary should be defined when encountered during content reading.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Integrating the teaching of reading strategies into the content area is necessary for increased comprehension. If interested in a reading assignment, students will want to talk about it after it is completed.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Students must be taught how to read content area texts. Cooperative learning aids in the comprehension of informational books. Stories are easier for beginning readers to understand than nonfiction or information books.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>A teacher requires special training to teach students how to read content area materials such as textbooks. Before assigning content area reading to students, the teacher should first teach the students how to find information.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Students who have problems in content area reading probably need remediation. The ability to understand narrative and expository text develops at the same time.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Reading instruction must be incorporated into all subject areas. Students can understand informational texts when they are read orally to them, even if they cannot read them individually.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rose</th>
<th>Kelli</th>
<th>John</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>When given a choice, students will choose to read fiction instead of information books.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Textbooks are easier to read than nonfiction trade books, because they have a controlled vocabulary designed for the specific age of the child.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Primary grade children can explain the differences between fiction and non-fiction.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The results from this survey showed the three teachers agreed on eight areas:

1) Every teacher is a teacher of reading.

2) Very young students should understand how to find information in textbooks.

3) New vocabulary should be defined when encountered during content reading.

4) Integrating the teaching of reading strategies into the content area is necessary for increased comprehension.

5) If interested in a reading assignment, students will want to talk about it after it is completed.

6) Cooperative learning aids in the comprehension of informational books.
7) Before assigning content-area reading to students, the teacher should first teach the students how to find information.

8) Reading instruction must be incorporated into all subject areas.

The participants were also assessed using the Literacy Orientation Survey developed by Sue Lenski (1998). The responses on this survey help understand the feelings, beliefs, and behaviors regarding these teachers’ literacy and literacy instruction.

At least 2 of the 3 teachers agreed upon 11 statements:

1) When students read text, I ask them questions such as “What does it mean?”

2) I encourage my students to monitor their comprehension as they read.

3) Students should be encouraged to sound out all unknown words.

4) I teach using themes or integrated units.

5) Subject should be integrated across the curriculum.

6) Students need to write for a variety of purposes.

7) When planning instruction, I take into account the needs of children by including activities that meet their social, emotional, physical, and affective needs.

8) Parents’ attitudes toward literacy affect my students’ progress.

9) Parental reading habits in the home affect their children’s attitudes toward reading.
10) At the end of each day, I reflect on the effectiveness of my instructional decisions.

11) Students should be treated as individual learners rather than as a group.

The findings were analyzed to interpret what their literacy orientation score meant by totaling each teacher’s belief and practice statements. Their literacy orientation scores determined if the teachers were traditional, eclectic, or constructivist. A traditional teacher uses reading methods such as basal reading instruction, teaches using primarily direct instruction, or views students as “vessels to be filled.” An eclectic teacher uses some traditional and some constructivist reading methods, frequently “basalizes” literature selections, or combines traditional and constructivist views about student learning. A constructivist teacher uses whole text and integrated instruction, teaches using a primarily inquiry approach, and views students as using prior knowledge to construct meaning to learn. All three teachers in the study rated as traditional and each teacher’s belief score was higher than his or her practice score. This shows these teachers haven’t found a way to incorporate their constructivist beliefs into their own classrooms. This survey was important because understanding a teacher’s beliefs helps understand a teacher’s reasons for what they do. Does the teacher focus on the student or the curriculum? A teacher’s commitment to students’ success prompts the teacher to look beyond subject-area concepts to find ways that would help students become better learners.
Teachers use strategies to help students become successful learners and meet their needs. (1992) Teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about pedagogy stem from a complex interaction of the experiences, beliefs, and values about life and learning (Grimmet & MacKinnon, as cited in Moje, 1996). It is important to look not only at teaching beliefs and practices, but also at beliefs and decisions about teaching and learning, and about life experiences. Teachers make decisions to teach literacy strategies to students based on their knowledge and beliefs about learners’ needs and abilities (pedagogical learner knowledge). Thus resistance to or acceptance of the teaching of literacy strategies may be based on the philosophical and cultural views that pre- and in-service teachers hold about learners and their needs and abilities, as well as their beliefs about content, teaching, and learning (Grimmet & MacKinnon, as cited in Moje, 1996). It may benefit teachers, in content literacy methods classes, to examine their beliefs and evaluate whether commitment to teaching is one based in subject matter or in students.

This data shows that despite positive attitudes toward reading in the content areas, the teachers in this study still take a traditional stance toward teaching, focusing more on filling the students with information. This was observed by the researcher 18 times in Kelli’s room, 16 times in Rose’s room, and 3 times in John’s room.
**Research Question 2: What strategies occur in a content-area teacher’s classroom and what are their frequency?**

The CARS Questionnaire was used to determine what about content-area reading strategies the teacher is familiar with, if they use them, and if they should use them. The questionnaire consisted of 43 items assembled from an extensive review of literature related to content-area strategy instruction. Kelli reported using conferencing, graphic organizers, prior knowledge, questioning methods, structured overviews, and study guides. Rose reported using enrichment activities, matching definitions, prediction, prior knowledge, questioning methods, reciprocal teaching, study guides, and words maps. John reported using computer programs, matching definitions, prior knowledge, questioning methods, study guides, and summarizing.

During interviews Rose shared that she incorporates reading strategies in her classroom when she has time. These strategies include:

1) Having students read their lab ahead of time and writing out the lab before they come to class.

2) Having students prepare for videos by completing worksheets the night before and answering questions they already know, so they are not spending as much time writing during the video.

3) Having students use prefixes to learn the table of elements by breaking down information into smaller pieces to foster better understanding.
4) Having students use strategies to pick out key words and develop summary statements.

5) Teaching students strategies to break down and understand large words.

6) Preparing students for tests by teaching them self-questioning strategies.

Kelli claims she doesn’t teach reading in the content areas much except when she goes over story problems. To help students with word problems, Kelli uses these strategies:

1) Helping students underline what is important to help them set equations and not focus on extraneous wording.

2) Helping students paraphrase word problems so the information can be put into equations claiming it is easier to read only three sentences at a time.

3) Putting word problems on one page when underlining does not work, reading over them through drill and practice together. Kelli claimed that many students do not know how to read properly and need to learn how to skim to find answers. She said the students need to understand wording and that each word means something.

John has shared in interviews that he does not teach reading, and he does not know how to teach reading. Despite this statement, John does help students with reading when they struggle in his class. John uses strategies in his classroom that involve helping his students pass the Ohio Graduation Test. His strategies include:
1) Teaching students the process of elimination to help them take multiple-choice tests.

2) Teaching students to write in a concise manner for the writing component of the test by showing them how to be brief and accurate, because if students contradict themselves, the scorers will take points off.

3) Teaching students to answer extended response questions using bullets points instead of writing a paragraph.

4) Teaching students how to think through solving a problem, while questioning each answer one at a time to best answer the short-answer questions. Despite these strategies, not much of John’s day is made up of reading activities.

The researcher conducted classroom observations to assess these three teacher’s use of content-area reading. She organized these with the help of a chart from Sirpa Grierson called Content Area Reading Observation Checklist (Appendix Y). Table 2 shows the areas that were looked for during classroom observations along with their frequency.
Table 2

*Content-Area Reading Observation Findings by Teacher*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content-area reading checklist</th>
<th>Number of observations</th>
<th>Rose</th>
<th>Kelli</th>
<th>John</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher behavior</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of reading material</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses information-based text</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses literature-based text</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses textbook</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows time for reading (SSR)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points out text pattern signals</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows students to organize reading tasks</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses expository text structure</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prereading</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses content area strategies</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assesses student interests</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-assesses student knowledge</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses prereading strategies</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills-centered approach</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy-centered approach</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previews vocabulary</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks higher-order questions to stimulate thought</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begins with what students already know</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models a reading strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activates and focuses student reading</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows students to select reading tasks</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlines expectations about reading</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lets students assume responsibility for reading</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>During reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses content-area reading strategies</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models efferent reading</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models aesthetic reading</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses concrete experiences</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses abstract experiences</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks higher-order questions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immerses students in text</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engages children’s interest</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepts approximations</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models thinking strategies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
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Table 2 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content-area reading checklist</th>
<th>Number of observations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postreading</strong></td>
<td>Rose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses content-area strategies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses postreading strategies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postreading</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrates topic into curriculum</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviews learning</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models problem-solving</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discusses problems</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinforces learning through review</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrates new knowledge into old</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offers feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student behavior</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Works alone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Works in a group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Works with whole class</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks questions</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seems engaged in reading tasks</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates understanding</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers questions thoughtfully</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans reading tasks</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitors own reading</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluates own reading</td>
<td>14</td>
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In analyzing this checklist all three teachers’ behaviors regarding Choice of Reading Material included allowing time for reading (SSR) and allowing students to organize reading tasks. In regard to prereading, the teachers’ behaviors included preassessing student knowledge, using a skills-centered approach, previewing vocabulary, asking higher-order questions, beginning with what students already know,
activating and focusing student reading, and letting students assume responsibility for reading. The teachers’ behaviors During Reading included modeling efferent reading, using concrete experiences, using abstract experiences, asking higher-order questions, immersing students in text, and modeling thinking strategies. Finally, in regard to Postreading, the teachers’ behaviors included integrating topics into curriculum, reviewing learning, modeling problem solving, discussing problems, reinforcing learning through review, integrating new knowledge into old, and offering feedback. This data shows that these teachers do incorporate reading strategies when there is time and if it enhances the curriculum of their content area. The researcher observed Kelli teaching students to color code with story problems 1 time, Rose teaching self-questioning 2 times, and John teaching the process of elimination 2 times.

Kelli focuses on helping students comprehend, helping students learn vocabulary, and helping students use better study skills. This is done through story problems. To help students with word problems Kelli teaches them strategies to help them. Kelli explained how she helps her students underline what is important and pull out important parts to help them set up equations and not focus on extraneous wording. If underlining doesn’t work, Kelli puts word problems on one page and students read over them through drill and practice together. Kelli claims that many students don’t know how to read properly, and need to know how to skim to find answers. She said that the students need to understand wording and that each word means something. Kelli helps her students relate
to text by sharing examples in class such as the probability of winning the lottery or chances you could break the combination to a lock.

Rose focuses on helping students comprehend, helping students learn vocabulary, helping students relate to text, and helping students use better study skills. Rose’s goal is for her students to not only read information, but also to understand it. Rose gives her students information about labs and movies before the activity to help enhance students’ comprehension. Rose shows students how to break down information into smaller pieces they can understand it after it is explained. Another strategy Rose has implemented is helping her students learn about the table of elements by using prefixes. Knowing prefixes actually helps students learn science better. She teaches them Latin and Greek words and she shows them how those parts of words help students understand the word meanings. Rose teaches her students strategies to break down and understand large words. They have 3- or 4-syllable words that make up huge scientific words. She helps them break down the word and shows students what the parts mean.

To help students relate to text Rose discusses octane gas with her students. She explains how they will need to purchase a car in the future and need to be aware of how many miles per gallon the car will use. She explains to the students that it could be the difference between $1,000 and $2,000. To help students prepare for tests Rose teaches her students self-questioning strategies. Students then keep retesting himself until they score 100%.
John focuses on study skills with his students so they understand how to take tests. John says the process of elimination is the way that will help students take a multiple-choice test such as the OGT. The second strategy addresses writing, the other part of the OGT. He teaches students to be brief and accurate. John explains that if you contradict yourself, the scorers will take points off. It’s not a writing test, it’s a content test. John explains that there are two types of writing questions. One is the extended response, in which scorers are looking for four things. John has his students use four bullets instead of writing a paragraph. Short answers go after the extended response. John models for his students how to think through solving a problem, while questioning each answer one at a time.

That data from observations showed that Kelli incorporated 16 comprehension activities, 2 lessons learning about vocabulary, 3 lessons relating to text, and 2 lessons learning better study skills. Rose incorporated 11 comprehension activities, 6 lessons learning about vocabulary, 8 lessons relating to text, and 3 lessons learning about better study skills. John incorporated 16 comprehension activities, 2 lessons learning about vocabulary, 8 lessons relating to text, and 3 lessons learning about better study skills.

The data shows that these teachers incorporate reading when it enhances the curriculum that they are responsible for teaching and they do a lot of comprehension activities with their students.
Research Question 3: What role does literature play in three rural high school classrooms?

All three of the teachers use some type of textbook to help them enhance their students’ learning. All these teachers choose textbooks based on their alignment with the Ohio standards and their relation to the OGT. They like these textbooks because they give the students practice problems to help the teachers see if their students are obtaining the information they need to do well on upcoming achievement tests. If these textbooks do not contain all the needed information, these teachers obtain supplemental materials to fill in the gaps. Additional materials are obtained from the Internet, resource files, or other teaching materials.

Rose chooses textbooks that explain the material through pictures and diagrams that give visuals to students, and graphs that help students learn to analyze findings. She feels the textbook also should add background information and trivial stuff to make learning more interesting. Rose enhances her students’ instruction with an OGT Notebook that follows along with the textbook. There are objectives to each chapter that include activities and every objective is coordinated to the benchmark and the standard it falls under.

Kelli models her class and the use of the textbook after a college course. She searches out resources that offer the best information for her students. She likes textbooks that review and break down information with problems that provide real-life situations and require higher-level thinking. Finally, Kelli does activities from *Cracking the AP*
Exam to help prepare students for the Advanced Placement Calculus Test. By exposing students to these types of questions, she hopes they will start to think about how to solve problems independently.

Because there are no OGT textbooks, John developed his own using the state standards, research, and hundreds of hours of his own time. His textbooks include units using the benchmarks and grade level indicators for the state. Therefore, he uses his course description packets in place of traditional textbooks to prepare students for the OGT.

In the demographic survey Rose and John reported use nonfiction tradebooks in their classrooms, with Rose using them daily. Rose says the nonfiction tradebooks are really textbooks, not actual tradebooks.

This data shows that these teachers incorporate nonfiction literature (textbooks) in their classrooms, along with supplemental materials, that help prepare their students for the OGT. The researcher saw Kelli using textbooks 2 times, Rose 9 times, and John 3 times.

Research Question 4: Who do rural high-school teachers believe should be responsible for content-area reading? What influences a teacher’s decision to implement literacy practices in their classroom?

The teachers in this study have varying beliefs about whose job it is to teach reading. Rose feels it is an actual reading teacher’s job to help students learn to read. In
the primary classes, the self-contained teacher has more opportunities to teach reading because they have students all day and can make connections. A departmentalized teacher’s focus should be on his or her subject area. She also feels it is important for parents and siblings to read to the students at home and have the student read to them. Therefore, the teacher does the original teaching but parents should encourage and support them.

Kelli claims she knows teaching reading is her job too, but explains that at this level, she’s preparing her students for college by teaching information in the content area that they need to learn to graduate. She feels the elementary schools are the most important part and should teach phonics and how to read. She feels it is not necessarily solely the elementary teachers’ job, but they are the ones who teach the basic skills. Kelli feels elementary teachers teach students the basic skills to get to middle school; middle-school teachers teach students to get them to high school; and high-school teachers teach basic skills for students to get to college.

John feels it is the primary and elementary teacher’s job to teach reading. According to John, he does not teach reading, he does not know how to teach reading, and he would not know how to teach reading. He assumes his students know how to read before they get to him. Despite this, John helps students with reading when they struggle in class.

As mentioned earlier, the OGT, along with the standards from the state of Ohio, dictate what these three teachers have to teach on a daily basis. It is their whole focus.
The year has to be strictly mapped to allow teachers to get everything taught in five months, when they use to have a whole school year to teach. The test is in early March, so teachers use February to review information from previous grades. The OGT has even caused this small rural high school to realign its traditional yearly schedule. The school has rotated from a traditional schedule to block scheduling and back to a traditional schedule again. In a traditional schedule, students go to each period for 40 minutes each day. Although teachers have a shorter amount of time with students, the traditional schedule promotes consistency in meeting every day for the whole school year and gives teachers more preassessments to monitor student learning. In block scheduling, teachers have 80 minutes with their students per day, but the class may be only one semester long. During interviews, Rose shared that during blocks she could actually cover more content reading. Under traditional scheduling, she has to depend on her students to complete their reading assignment at home. In trying to improve OGT scores, the administration of this small rural school felt it necessary to revert back to the traditional schedule they had followed many years before.

Finally, time is a factor in these teachers’ decisions in incorporating reading into their content areas or choosing not to. With only September through January available for teaching, time is precious to these teachers. Snow days are viewed as “bad days” instead of “days off” because the teachers have mapped out the whole year day by day to prepare students for the big finale in March. They feel they have to teach based on the content being assessed. Therefore, literacy takes a back seat to the content they are responsible
for teaching. If something “textbook-wise” can enhance this curriculum, these teachers are more willing to use it. For example, if a student could read a particular book to help them understand energy better, then the science teacher would be more willing to use this in her classroom.

Kelli shared that when she was in college she thought she would get to implement all the things she had learned. But once she got into her own classroom, she realized there’s no time to do everything you want. Test content is the focus.

This data shows that these teachers feel it is primarily the elementary teacher’s job to prepare students for reading. The OGT and state standards dictate what these teachers have to teach on a daily basis. Kelli gives her students practice tests to see where their thinking is and where it needs to be. She takes them through the steps. Kelli exposes her students to problems they will see on upcoming tests so they know how to handle them when they see them. By exposing her students to these types of questions she hopes they will start to think about how to solve problems. The researcher observed Kelli preparing for the ACT and having a discussion about preparing for the SAT with a book she purchased over the weekend. Kelli deals more with these two tests since her students are mostly at the college prep level. The researcher observed Rose and John implementing OGT standards on 4 separate observations each.
Research Question 5: What methods do rural high-school teachers use in their classrooms?

As shared in each of the case studies, each of the three teachers, in his or her own way, modeled various strategies with their students to prepare them for future assessments. All the teachers felt the stress of preparing their students for something bigger and beyond their own classrooms. The three teachers in the study made statements of methods to help students, realizing that IEP students need course information presented in a different format. They choose the best resources that to cover the standards for the state of Ohio. Therefore, these teachers have to be flexible and reflective to meet their students’ needs and to get students to learn what they need.

These teachers make sure lessons match up with and cover the Ohio standards. Objectives are taken from the benchmarks of the OGT and then they find materials that cover the objectives. The teachers develop questions and do activities related to the textbook to prepare students for the test. That is the goal. To prepare these materials, these teachers give up a lot of their own time over the summer or throughout the school year to make sure they cover everything in time before the big test. All of these teachers have to teach by lecture despite their teaching philosophy, or method of choice, to get their curriculum covered in 6 months instead of 9 months because the OGT is administered in March. These teachers actually have less time to cover the material because they have to stop a month before that to review previous material. Most of these teachers have everything mapped out as to what they have to cover each day. To help the
teachers prepare their students for achievement tests, these teachers promote cooperative learning with other teachers.

All three teachers have unique experiences with their students. All joke with the students in their classrooms. These teachers not only sacrifice their own time for curricular planning but also devote their time to extracurricular activities and coaching. These activities help develop a different relationship between these teachers and their students and make a difference in them getting to know each other better.

These teachers motivate their students to learn. They encourage their students and motivate them to do well on their tests. These teachers therefore practice high expectations with their students. All three teachers monitor their students’ progress and give them pretests and mentor their students by analyzing the results and pinpointing the areas where the students need improvement. This helps the teachers see if their students actually retain what they learn in class. Depending on what these teachers perceive, they may try to help students make connections. They may go more in-depth with topics that are related to life and apply situations to the real world. These teachers also may find out what students are interested in and connect it to their lives and how it will affect them personally.

All of these teachers use hands-on activities to help further their students’ learning. They have students do projects where they have to apply what they have learned in class. Research shows that students learn better and retain information longer in a discovery-type learning situation. All of these projects evolve from the benchmarks the
teachers have to teach. Along with hands-on activities, all of these teachers incorporate visual aids in their classrooms. They know that some students are visual learners and may need a concept demonstrated on a chalkboard or overhead, or through pictures, role play, manipulatives, graphic organizers, computers, objects, or displays. Usually if students are given an example, they do OK. All 3 teachers in this study implement higher-level thinking activities. Through these projects, students have the opportunity to analyze, infer, compare/contrast, summarize, explain, describe, define, and research. Through these types of activities students also exercise their creativity.

All 3 of these teachers deal with time as an issue. These teachers don’t have much time to teach extraneous things like higher-level questioning, hands-on activities, and cooperative learning—things they feel are important to teach and things the kids think are fun. They dedicate their time to their curriculum and focus on getting their students prepared for achievement tests.

This data shows that these teachers spend a lot of their own time choosing resources and strategies that cover standards and encourage and monitor their students’ progress toward the OGT. The researcher observed Kelli practicing strategies for the ACT and another time discussing about a book she bought to prepare for the upcoming SAT. Kelli deals with these 2 tests more than the OGT since she teaches many of the upper level college prep students. The researcher also observed Rose and John incorporating resources and strategies and monitoring progress on 4 separate occasions.
Limitations

A limitation of the study was that the researcher was not able to engage in persistent observation for an extended time in the field, due to working as a full-time teacher. Even though the researcher teaches in the same school district and has some capital, she teaches in a separate building and she had to establish trust and learn the culture of the school through the interviews she conducted and through the time she was able to establish rapport with teachers in the field through the 3-month observation period. She does not teach directly with the participants because she is an elementary teacher and in a separate building than the high-school teachers. At the beginning of the study the teachers and staff were standoffish, but the teachers warmed up to the researcher after the first couple of weeks of observations and after the first round of interviews were conducted.

No Formal Training

Discussion

Content literacy is difficult to infuse into the secondary school due to a lack of preparation in teaching education programs (O’Brien & Stewart, 1990). John was the only teacher in the study who had taken a required reading methods class but he said he did not remember the content of the course. Rose and Kelli were not required to take a content-area reading class. Two of the three teachers were not formally taught to teach reading in the content areas, which concurs with findings by Simonson (1995) that most
colleges and universities did not require a course in reading methods for secondary education majors.

The teachers in this study are not required by their school district to teach reading in the content areas. Kelli responded that her main focus is the content-area standards and aligning them with the OGT. John feels it is his job to teach his students the curriculum and get them to pass the OGT. His comments concur with Bean’s (2000) findings that preservice teachers are likely to respond positively to strategies learned in their university classes; however, they jettison most of these approaches in favor of more didactic modes of instruction once they are at the school site.

**It’s Not My Job**

Kincaid (1977) claims most content teachers view themselves as responsible for teaching content, not for developing their students’ ability to read the content. When asked whose job it was to teach reading, the 3 teachers in this study had two different viewpoints. Although Kelli believes that it is everyone’s job to teach reading, she feels each teacher should prepare students for the next level—elementary to junior high, junior high to high school, and high school to college. Although some studies show that many teachers have negative attitudes toward being responsible for content-area reading instruction in their content classrooms (O’Brien, as cited in Bradberry, 2003), Rose shared examples of how reading makes up a percentage of her day.
On the other spectrum, John feels it is the elementary teacher’s job, which is in agreement with research by Bean and Readence (1989) and Blintz (1997), which found many teachers believe that the teaching of reading is the responsibility of either elementary teachers or reading teachers. According to John, he does not teach reading, he does not know how they teach reading, and he would not know how to teach reading. He assumes his students know how to read before they get to him. Teachers expect that students entering secondary school will have the skills necessary to understand the concepts and ideas involved in their respective subjects, as well as the ability to read at various levels of complexity, without any help from them whatsoever (Haque, 1976). However, John helps his students with reading when they struggle with it in class.

Artley (1944) pointed out the middle ground between these two extreme viewpoints. He believed the reading teacher furnishes the nucleus around which basic training is given, while the other teachers apply these basic learnings to their particular instructional area. Flannagan (1975) proclaims that as a specialist in his subject, the content-area teacher is in the unique position to teach reading skills and content materials simultaneously. Armbruster (1992, 1993) also states that it is important that teachers be prepared to teach reading to learn within science, social studies, and math methods courses because it is there that prospective teachers can best learn about the features of the text and strategies peculiar to each discipline. It is the content teachers’ obligation to teach students “the most efficient systems of reading that content” (Frederick, as cited in Flanagan, 1975, p. X). Findings in this study agree with this research. John volunteered to
teach all sophomores in his content area to prepare them for the OGT. John said he wanted the special-needs kids because he thought he could do a better job teaching them the curriculum, as he is the specialist in his area.

I Just Don’t Have Time

Research suggests that many secondary teachers do not incorporate reading in the content areas due to a lack of time. Interviews conducted with the 3 teachers in this study support those findings. Kelli thought that she would have ample time to implement techniques learned in her college coursework. When she got into the classroom, she realized she did not have time. Researchers (Bradberry, 2003; Madden, 2000; Schubert, 1971) also found time was a deterrent to incorporating reading in the content area classes. McCullough (1975) and Hargrove (1973) claim that teachers view reading in the content areas as more work to do. Secondary teachers are convinced that using such practices are too time consuming.

Allegiance to Curriculum

By using subject-related material regularly, content teachers can provide for the simultaneous teaching of reading skills and course content. Neither has to be sacrificed for the other (Bradberry, 2003). However, the 3 teachers in this study feel their particular curriculum (state standards), along with the OGT, took priority. Rose cares about reading, but not enough to take class time from the other things she needs to cover. Kelli feels
everything she teaches has to relate to the standards. John also feels the crunch of trying to get his curriculum covered in time to prepare his students for the OGT. Research by O’Brien, Stewart, and Moje (1995) supports this attitude; they found that secondary teachers do not incorporate reading in the content areas because they shape their teaching by a technical rationality and their loyalties of teaching to their own content area. According to O’Brien and Stewart (1990), content literacy is difficult to infuse into the secondary school due to the resistance deeply rooted in beliefs and traditions of school life relating to teachers’ roles and allegiance to content disciplines.

Variation of Attitudes of Classroom Teachers Toward Reading

Beliefs about “good teacher” behaviors were based on beliefs about what student effects those behaviors would cause. Hall (2005) says given this, it is important for us to understand content area teachers’ beliefs about reading instruction, and how they view their role as teachers of reading. While teacher’ beliefs can influence a wide range of areas, such as how and what gets taught, it can have a direct impact on content-area reading. However, it is most likely that it is their beliefs (or convictions) about teaching and/or how they should teach reading is based on incomplete/incorrect knowledge or how they have observed others teach it. These beliefs are rooted in a teacher’s philosophy. Those decisions are then a reflection of their beliefs and not necessarily governed by pedagogical and subject matter knowledge. It would be important for a researcher to
understand a teacher’s philosophy prior to starting a study to see if the teacher believes in content-area reading and incorporates those strategies in his or her own classroom.

In this study, the reasons, attitudes, and beliefs important in why teachers incorporate reading into their content classroom in a rural high school were investigated using Grierson’s (1996) survey. The results of this survey showed the three teachers (who were chosen randomly) agreed on 8 areas:

1) Every teacher is a teacher of reading.
2) Very young students should understand how to find information in textbooks.
3) New vocabulary should be defined when encountered during content reading.
4) Integrating the teaching of reading strategies into the content area is necessary for increased comprehension.
5) If interested in a reading assignment, students will want to talk about it after it is completed.
6) Cooperative learning aids in the comprehension of informational books.
7) Before assigning content-area reading to students, the teacher should first teach the students how to find information.
8) Reading instruction must be incorporated into all subject areas.

The participants also were assessed using the Literacy Orientation Survey developed by Sue Lenski (1998). The responses on this survey help understand the
feelings, beliefs, and behaviors regarding these teachers’ literacy and literacy instruction.

At least two of the three teachers agreed on 11 statements:

1) When students read text, I ask them questions such as “What does it mean?”.
2) I encourage my students to monitor their comprehension as they read.
3) Students should be encouraged to sound out all unknown words.
4) I teach using themes or integrated units.
5) Subject should be integrated across the curriculum.
6) Students need to write for a variety of purposes.
7) When planning instruction, I take into account the needs of children by including activities that meet their social, emotional, physical, and affective needs.
8) Parents’ attitudes toward literacy affect my students’ progress.
9) Parental reading habits in the home affect their children’s attitudes toward reading.
10) At the end of each day, I reflect on the effectiveness of my instructional decisions.
11) Students should be treated as individual learners rather than as a group.

These results showed that all three teachers in this study rated as traditional teachers on Lenski’s scale. A traditional teacher uses traditional reading methods such as basal reading instruction, teaches using primarily direct instruction, or views students as
“vessels to be filled.” However, each teacher’s belief score was higher than his or her practice score. This shows these teachers haven’t found a way to incorporate their constructivist beliefs into their own classrooms. According to Lenski (1998) constructivist teachers use whole text and integrated instruction, teach using an inquiry approach, and view students as using prior knowledge to construct meaning to learn. These findings concur with those of Bradberry (2003), who claims that gaining an understanding of why reading in the content areas is not universally embraced requires an in-depth review of the role that philosophical principles of teachers (attitudes and beliefs) play in affecting behavior and practice. O’Brien et al. (1995) also state, “Secondary teachers, like other workers, shape their beliefs and actions in relation to the structures, policies, and traditions of the workday and the school institution” (p. X). These structures, policies, and traditions combine to create the culture of the school (Bradberry, 2003). Grierson (1996) concluded that positive attitudes toward the teaching of reading strategies are based upon knowledge of the theories behind the teaching of reading. Donahue (2000) adds that having a required course in content-area reading could partially produce more than just a positive change in attitudes.

**Support for Content-Area Reading**

Building-level support is a key feature that affects instructional change and comfort level with new methodology (Dufour & Eaker; Forget; Guskey; Kelleher; Marzano, all as cited in Forget, 2004). Teachers need to have support both from building
level administration and their teaching colleagues to make the pedagogical shift that would be required to show increases in student behavioral and academic scores (Forget, 2004). Teachers would be more inclined to use published content-area reading strategies if there were more support from supervisors/administrators, more technical assistance in mastering the methods, and more opportunity to corroborate with peers (Manzo & Manzo, as cited in Forget, 2004). If a teacher is to successfully implement content-area reading, district-wide support and materials are necessary (Fullan, 1995).

When the three teachers in this study were asked what role they thought their principal had in content-area reading, they gave mixed responses. One felt that it was to make arrangements for the teachers to take curriculum classes that help them get in line with what the students need to know for the OGT, thus providing the opportunities for professional development. The second response was somewhat similar. This teacher felt the principal’s role was to make sure that the teachers are presenting the correct material, aligning with the standards in what should be taught. Again, the OGT was the main focus. The last teacher did not think the principal had any role.

**Recommendations for Practice and Future Research**

From this study the researcher concluded that teachers teach what they are required to teach. Teachers in this study focused on state standards because that is what is required by the state and their school district to teach students, to help them pass the OGT. Teachers feel they have to teach based on the content being assessed. Many
teachers view themselves as responsible for teaching content, and not for developing their students’ ability to read the content. Therefore, the role of literacy takes a back seat to the content they are responsible for teaching. Given that some content tests are actually reading tests more than tests of specific content knowledge, it is important that teachers recognize that their students’ reading abilities may play a significant role in their performance on these tests (Author, 2002). However, Hall (2005) says it is possible that content-area teachers do not understand the reading demands that these tests may place on their students. If teachers understood that reading can actually enhance their students’ comprehension on state achievement tests, they may be more willing to use their valuable class time to implement reading in the content areas. If reading were added to the state curriculum, teachers’ views might change because it would be something they would be responsible for as well. The key would be to show teachers how reading and content can be taught simultaneously with what they already do, not as something extra to be planned for or to take time away from their own curriculum.

If teaching reading in the content areas is expected to improve, colleges need to require these courses in pre-service programs. This is where prospective teachers can best learn about the features of the text and strategies peculiar to each discipline (Armbruster, 1992, 1993). Having a required course in content-area reading could partially produce more than just a positive change in attitudes (Donahue, 2000). These positive attitudes, along with district support, could lead to practice in content-area reading.
Schools need to have reading as their focus of importance from the top down or chances are it will not be implemented. Schools need to provide support to teachers if they want them to incorporate reading in the content area. Teachers need to have support from building-level administration and their teaching colleagues to make the pedagogical shift that would be required to show increases in student behavioral and academic scores (Forget, 2004). Fullan (1995) adds the importance of materials.

Gee, Olson, & Foster (1989) have suggested that in order to involve individual teachers in behavioral or instructional change (such as the adoption of new methods for teaching content-area reading) they must first understand the need for change. They must feel a sense of personal involvement with that change, followed by the support of sustained in-service training, and most important, a sense that this is something they want to accomplish for their own professional development, not because they are being remediated or coerced into learning.

**Summary**

This chapter discussed the findings of how reading in the content classroom is taught in a rural secondary school. The focus was on understanding the lived experiences, perspectives, and practices of 3 teachers who have taught reading in the content areas. The chapter also explained how and why teachers incorporate reading into content area instruction, so these practices could be shared with other educators.
All 3 teachers’ attitudes were the same on three specific characteristics. These included the integration of reading strategies in all content areas to aid comprehension and showing students how to find information. All 3 teachers’ belief systems were similar in that they rated as traditional teachers, but haven’t found a way to incorporate their beliefs into their own classrooms. These 3 teachers were found to use prior knowledge, questioning methods, and study guides. Out of these claimed strategies, these 3 teachers were observed asking higher-order questions and beginning lessons with what the students already know.

All 3 teachers use some type of textbook to help them enhance their students’ learning. These teachers choose textbooks based on their alignment with Ohio standards and their relation to the OGT. They like these textbooks because they provide the students practice problems to help the teachers see if their students are retaining the information they need to do well on upcoming achievement tests. If these textbooks do not contain all the needed information, these teachers obtain supplemental materials to fill in the gaps. Additional materials are obtained from the Internet, resource files, or other teaching materials. Rose and John use nonfiction tradebooks in their classroom, with Rose using them on a daily basis. Rose says the nonfiction tradebooks are really textbooks, not actual tradebooks.

Basically all 3 teachers feel it is primarily the reading or primary teacher’s job to teach students reading; their focus is on their curriculum. The school year has to be strictly mapped out to allow teachers to get everything taught in 5 months. Each
participant involved in the study was described and a cross-case analysis was provided to help the reader understand the characteristics these 3 teachers have in common in relation to how they teach. Several themes emerged in the various techniques these teachers used in their instruction, including modeling, being reflective, establishing relationships, and monitoring students and their instruction.

To help investigate how high-school teachers in a rural area teach reading in the content areas, teachers’ attitudes and beliefs were analyzed as well as their practices. Two important things were found.

First, many teachers don’t realize what reading strategies are being used in their daily instruction. All 3 teachers shared in interviews that they either didn’t teach or only taught small amounts of reading strategies. But classroom observations and surveys found that the teachers do teach reading in the content areas. They teach using reading strategies but do not realize they are labeled as such. They think teaching reading is more the process of reading, as in decoding words.

Second, each of these teachers had teaching and learning beliefs that differed from their actual teaching practices. This shows that something is standing in the way of them being able to teach the way they believe. The “something” could be time or the OGT, a test mandated by the state of Ohio that every sophomore takes. Students must pass this test to graduate from high school. Therefore, a lot of importance is placed on this test from the state department of education to administration, from administration to teachers, and from teachers to students. The school used to be use 80-minute block
scheduling, which would have allowed these teachers more time to incorporate reading in
the content areas, but switched back to traditional 40-minute scheduling to improve
achievement scores.

John uses the lecture-drill-repeat method. He doesn’t like the method, but feels he
has to teach that way to get the curriculum taught to his students before the test in March.
Everything is mapped out each day. Kelli also says she has to lecture because there is a
lot of material to cover, which consumes the majority of class. Rose also plans out her
curriculum to make sure she covers her content before the OGT. It is frustrating when she
can’t cover as much as she wants to. Rose shares that a difficulty to teaching reading in
the content areas is time and needing to cover her science curriculum. She cares about
literacy, but not enough to take time out of the class from the other things that she needs
to cover. Until things change at the state level and students—not tests—are the priority,
teachers will continue to struggle with the conflict between how they believe they should
teach and their actual teaching practices.
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Certificate of Completion

Ohio University certifies that AMY KABEL completed the computer-based training course on the Protection of Human Research Subjects.

Serial: 696651  Date: 4/20/2004
APPENDIX B: EXEMPTION FROM IRB REVIEW

A determination has been made that the following research study is exempt from IRB review because it involves:

Category 2. research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior

Project Title: How is Reading in the Content Area Taught at Rural Schools?

Project Director: Amy Carpenter-Kabel

Department: Education

Advisor: William Smith

Rebecca Cale, Associate Director, Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your application for review. Any additions or modifications to the project must be approved by the IRB on an amendment prior to implementation.
APPENDIX C: PERMISSION TO USE ATCAR SURVEY

From: Sirpa J. Grierson, Ph.D.
To: [Recipient's name]
Sent: Wednesday, January 5, 2006 5:53 PM
Subject: Borrowing instruments from your dissertation

As part of the requirements for my doctoral program in reading at Ohio University, I am writing a dissertation entitled "How is Reading in the Content Area Taught in Rural Schools?" It is a phenomenological study designed to learn about the lived experiences of rural secondary teachers teaching reading in the content areas. This will be done through interviews. Due to the research by Hook & Rosenshine (1979) & Madden (2000) selfreporting is not as valid as data collected through observation. For this reason, it is my intention to spend a portion of time in each of the participants' classrooms to gain an indepth understanding of how the interviewees incorporate reading into the content areas. To help me conduct my research I am requesting permission from you to use the instruments from your dissertation titled "The Effects of Professional Development on Content Area Reading Instruction In The Early Elementary Grades." I know your study was based on the primary grades, but I would like to adjust it to the secondary grades in my study.

I am requesting to use the following instruments from your study: Attitudes Toward Content
Area Reading Instrument and the Demographic Questions. I am also interested in The Content Area Reading Observation Checklist and the CARS Questionnaire. I noticed the original authors of these were Kersh & Hamlin and Howe, Grierson, & Richmond (1995) and then they were revised by you. Does that just mean that I need your permission for those instruments since you revised them? I will email The Research Quarterly to get permission to use the Deford Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile. Thank you for your time! I hope to hear from you soon! I plan on distributing my surveys on February 1, 2006 and starting my classroom observations on February 21, 2006. Please get back with me as soon as you can. Thanks so much!
Sincerely,
Amv Kabel

January 23, 2006

1/30/2006
Hi Amy,
Good to hear that you are still working away at the dissertation. I am sure that you will be so happy to finally get it finished!
In response to your questions:
1 &2, My permission should be sufficient for each of the instruments-I think that Mark Richmond would agree; Daniels advised on the ATCAR and I am sure will not mind.
3. I would ask your committee if they want the formal letter in the dissertation. If not, I am fine with an email permission; I have given permission to others via email on previous occasions.
4. Yes, I would renumber the items. I am not sure why the numbers do not correspond as I haven't got the files with me, but renumbering it makes sense.
My positive thoughts are with you! Let me know how it goes-when do you plan to defend?
Sirpa
Sima Grierson, Ph.D.
APPENDIX D: DISCUSSION OF ANALYSIS OF ATCAR SURVEY

Wednesday, August 08, 2007 7:24 PM
RE: Question About Analysis of the ATCAR Survey

Hi Amy,

I am out of the office until sometime next week. I really can't remember if I have any specific paper that helps analyze the information. It was a Likert scale as recall, but no one has ever formally written up anything on the analysis, except what might be in my dissertation. Sorry to be of so little help on this one.

Sirpa

Sent: Tuesday, July 31, 2007 10:06 PM
To: Sirpa Grierson
Subject: Question About Analysis of the ATCAR Survey

Sirpa,
Thanks for getting back with me! I plan to defend in the fall. I changed the order of the numbers and followed the procedure from your dissertation for computing each of the scores for the ATCAR Survey. I came up with the scores of 95, 99, and 105. Is there a paper with a scale and information to help me explain (analyze) these scores?
Thanks again for your help! You have been wonderful!
Amy Kabel

To: Paul Kabel
Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2006 6:11 PM
Subject: RE: Questions

Amy, here are the files. I have changed them around and hopefully they are all legible in Word 2003. I know that there might be formatting problems as these are old files and unstable when you change them into a newer word-processing program. Let me know if you can't read them and I will have the dept secretary send them to you.

Sirpa
Sirpa Grierson, Ph.D.

From:
Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2006 4:43 AM
To: Sirpa Grierson
Subject: Questions

Sirpa,

1. I was able to print out the attachments in word but not coral word perfect because we don't have that program. My husband said a trial version takes 14 hours to download and it never gave him a quote on how much money to download the program. He thinks it will be expensive and he doesn't think our computer will be able to download it. I'm not sure if what printed out in word is what it is suppose to look like. If not, could you send them to me in the mail and I'll reimburse you?
2. May I have a copy of your observation checklist. My copy is hard to read.
3. The CARS Questionnaire and the ATCAR survey you sent me look different from the two I have from your dissertation. Your CARS Questionnaire has three categories with uneven categories that are
up, down, up, down. The ATCAR survey you sent me has different symbols and numbering than the survey I have. I'm not sure why these are different, and which I should use? Thanks so much for your time! I really appreciate all your help!

Amy Kabel

Thursday, February 02, 2006 7:03 PM
RE: Questions

Hi Amy,

Yes - I actually teach in an English department in a Secondary English Education section. Most of what I am doing with content reading is still highly influenced by the finding in my dissertation. The strategies that I used are just as applicable to secondary students - and especially to those who are non-proficient or struggling readers. I have wanted to work further on this an actually began a study several years ago to adapt these instruments to secondary teachers but have since that time turned my attention to different research areas. If you read my dissertation, I conducted quantitative statistical analysis on the data, a model that you could follow or adapt by reading the data chapter. It has been so long that I can't recall all the details ... sorry. The observation checklist could be analyzed with qualitative means - (basically kept "thick" ethnographic filed notes on the information (they are summarized in the appendices, I believe), but did not plumb them for the information as it was beyond the focus of the study. If you were to consult a handbook such as *Qualitative Research for Education* by Bogdan and Bicklen, they would have suggestions for setting up and analyzing the data in an ethnographic format. I think that this type of analysis is most helpful as it includes classroom observation and interviews. I would be very interested in your results.

Sirpa
Sirpa Grierson, Ph.D.

To: Sirpa Grierson
Subject: Re: Questions

Sirpa,

Thank you so much for sending the surveys to me. I really appreciate all your help and support. I met with my dissertation chair last night and he wanted me to ask you the following questions:
1. Do you think your surveys and observation checklist would be appropriate for my study since I am doing secondary instead of primary teachers?
2. Also, how do I interpret these surveys once I get them back from the teachers. Is there a particular formula or certain numbers to look at? The observation checklist also.
Thanks for your time!

Amy Kabel
APPENDIX E: PERMISSION TO USE LITERACY ORIENTATION SURVEYS

From:
To:
Sent: Sunday, February 05, 2006 6:22 PM
Subject: Re: Permission to Use Your Literacy Orientation Survey

Yes, the author permission is sufficient. Good luck with your study.
sue

Quoting Paul Kabel:

> Sue,
> Thanks for getting back with me so quickly! Laurie Elish-Piper (who gave me your contact information) said that your survey first appeared in Reading & Instruction. Is your permission sufficient since you are the author, or do I need their permission as well?
> Thanks so much for your time and help! Please let me know today if you can. I would like to distribute these surveys tomorrow.
> Amy Kabel

> ----- Original Message ----> From:
> To: Paul Kabel
> Sent: Saturday, February 04, 2006 3:17 PM
> Subject: Re: Permission to Use Your Literacy Orientation Survey
> 
> Amy,
> Yes, you have permission to use the survey.

Best wishes,
Sue Lenski

Quoting Paul Kabel:
I am writing to ask you permission to use your Literacy Orientation Survey. I am currently working on my dissertation at Ohio University titled "How is Reading in the Content Areas Taught in Rural Schools?" Your survey would be very beneficial to my study. I would like to distribute my surveys to the
teachers on Monday of this upcoming week. Please let me know as soon as possible if I can use your survey in my study. I really appreciate your time. Thank you so much and have a nice weekend!

Amy Kabel
I am a third grade teacher in which I teach the areas of reading and science. I have special needs students who have lower reading abilities. To help these students be successful in my science classes, I incorporate various strategies to help them read and comprehend the content subject. In my opinion, reading needs to be taught in every subject area to help all students be successful. As a classroom teacher I also understand though how frustrating it is to have another thing added to your duties to perform. I work closely with the special needs teacher (as a partnership) to meet these students' needs. I also feel the pressure as a teacher to focus on the state curriculum to get my students to pass state mandated tests. I feel that the answer to teaching reading in the content areas is to have the knowledge and be given the time and support to allow incorporation.

* According to Moustakas (1994) one must first reflect on the meaning of the experience for him or herself and then turn outward and establish the intersubjective validity, testing this understanding with other individuals (Creswell, 1998).
APPENDIX G: TEACHER CORRESPONDENCE

Letter Sent to Teachers with Surveys

January 22, 2006

Dear Teachers,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my research dissertation project. You received a letter from me several weeks ago explaining my study and how important your involvement will be.

Enclosed you will find the surveys that will be used in my study. They include: A Demographic Questionnaire, The Content Area Reading Strategies Questionnaire, Attitudes Toward Content Area Reading, and the Literacy Orientation Survey.

It should take you approximately 20-30 minutes to complete these surveys. Your responses will remain anonymous and confidential. To help maintain confidentiality, please seal your surveys in the envelopes and include your name on the outside of the envelope, so your principal and I know you have completed and returned the surveys. That will ensure that only my committee members, a possible transcriptionist, and I will see the surveys. Your principal will then forward them onto me. Thanks again.

Sincerely,

Amy Kabel
Query About Observation Times

Thank you again for your participation. Without your assistance I wouldn't be able to conduct my study. My project requires I do observations for a three month time period from 7:30-8:10 a.m. Would you be willing for me to come in and observe you for this time period? Yes or No
APPENDIX H: TEACHERS’ DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY RESPONSES

Kelli

Demographic Questions

Please Answer Each Question

1. How many years of teaching experience have you had?
2. How many years have you taught at this grade level?
3. What university degree do you currently hold?
   (1=Bachelors; 2=Masters; 3=Specialist; 4=Ph.D)
4. What grade do you currently teach?
   (1=9th grade; 2=10th grade; 3=11th grade; 4=12th grade)
5. Do you use nonfiction trade books in your classroom?
   1=No  2=Yes
6. If so, how often?
   (1=daily; 2=at least 2 x each week; 3=at least 2 x a month; 4=other)
7. Do you use literature-based units in your classroom?
   1=No  2=Yes
8. If so, how often?
   (1=daily; 2=at least 2 x each week; 3=at least 2 x a month; 4=other)
9. Do your students read nonfiction tradebooks in your classroom?
   1=No  2=Yes
10. If so, how often?
    (1=daily; 2=at least 2 x each week; 3=at least 2 x a month; 4=other)

11. Do secondary students benefit from content reading?
   1=No  2=Yes

12. Have you attended a reading or content area workshop?
    1=No  2=Yes

13. If yes, did you consider it to be worthwhile?
    1=No  2=Yes

14. Have you taken a course in content reading instruction?
    1=No  2=Yes

15. If yes, did you consider it to be worthwhile? 1=No 2=Yes
Rose

Demographic Questions

Please Answer Each Question

1. How many years of teaching experience have you had?

2. How many years have you taught at this grade level?

3. What university degree do you currently hold?
   (1=Bachelors; 2=Masters; 3=Specialist; 4=Ph.D)

4. What grade do you currently teach?
   (1=9th grade; 2=10th grade; 3=11th grade; 4=12th grade)

5. Do you use nonfiction trade books in your classroom?
   (1=No; 2=Yes)

6. If so, how often?
   (1=daily; 2=at least 2 x each week; 3=at least 2x a month; 4=other)

7. Do you use literature-based units in your classroom?
   (1=No; 2=Yes)

8. If so, how often?
   (1=daily; 2=at least 2 x each week; 3=at least 2 x a month; 4=other)

9. Do your students read nonfiction tradebooks in your classroom?
   (1=No; 2=Yes)

10. If so, how often?
    (1=daily; 2=at least 2 x each week; 3=at least 2 x a month; 4=other)

11. Do secondary students benefit from content reading?
   1=No  2=Yes

12. Have you attended a reading or content area workshop?
   1=No  2=Yes

13. If yes, did you consider it to be worthwhile?
   1=No  2=Yes

14. Have you taken a course in content reading instruction?
   1=No  2=Yes

15. If yes, did you consider it to be worthwhile? 1=No 2=Yes
John

**Demographic Questions**

*Please Answer Each Question*

1. How many years of teaching experience have you had? 18
   
2. How many years have you taught at this grade level? 18
   
3. What university degree do you currently hold?
   (1=Bachelors; 2=Masters; 3=Specialist; 4=Ph.D)
   
4. What grade do you currently teach?
   (1=9th grade; 2=10th grade; 3=11th grade; 4=12th grade)
   
5. Do you use nonfiction trade books in your classroom?
   1=No  2=Yes
   
6. If so, how often?
   (1=daily; 2=at least 2 x each week; 3=at least 2 x a month; 4=other)
   
7. Do you use literature-based units in your classroom?
   1=No  2=Yes
   
8. If so, how often?
   (1=daily; 2=at least 2 x each week; 3=at least 2 x a month; 4=other)
   
9. Do your students read nonfiction tradebooks in your classroom? 1=No  2=Yes
   
10. If so, how often?
    (1=daily; 2=at least 2 x each week; 3=at least 2 x a month; 4=other)

---

11. Do secondary students benefit from content reading?  
   1=No  2=Yes

12. Have you attended a reading or content area workshop?  
   1=No  2=Yes

13. If yes, did you consider it to be worthwhile?  
   1=No  2=Yes

14. Have you taken a course in content reading instruction?  
   1=No  2=Yes

15. If yes, did you consider it to be worthwhile?  1=No  2=Yes
APPENDIX I: CARS QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

### Content Area Reading Strategies (CARS) Questionnaire

Are you familiar with the following content area strategies? Answer Yes or No in column A. If Yes, please answer the questions in column B and C as well.

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<td>42</td>
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## Content Area Reading Strategies (CARS) Questionnaire

Are you familiar with the following content area strategies? Answer Yes or No in column A. If Yes, please answer the questions in columns B and C as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
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<td>use of text structure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>word maps</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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APPENDIX J: ATCAR SURVEY RESPONSES

Kelli


**Attitudes Toward Content Area Reading (ATCAR):**

**Definition:** Content area reading includes reading in subject-matter areas such as geography, history, mathematics, or science. Often expository in nature, content area text attempts to explain or to give information about a subject.

**Instructions:** Indicate your responses to each of the following statements by filling in the appropriate number.

- Strongly Disagree = 0
- Disagree = 1
- Neutral = 2
- Agree = 3
- Strongly Agree = 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Kelli</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42. Every teacher is a teacher of reading.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. The teaching of strategies for reading information text are best</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taught as separate skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. A slower rate of reading indicates that a student is having</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difficulty comprehending the text.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Content reading should be assigned for a specific purpose.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. The teaching of reading should be limited to the language arts block.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. Even very young students should understand how to find information</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in textbooks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>48. Preassessment of student's interests should direct content reading</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instruction.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Supplementary texts or less difficult materials are needed for</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>students who read below grade level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>50. Open-ended questioning techniques are effective in increasing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comprehension of informational passages.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>51. When students reread passages of text, their comprehension</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>increases.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. Special materials are needed in order to teach students how to</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gain information from text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>53. Students should be able to choose the amount of reading that they</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>will do for a class assignment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>54. Every subject area requires different reading strategies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>55. A teacher should first introduce an information book by discussing</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>how it might be read most effectively.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. The modeling of reading strategies has little effect on teaching students to read content area materials.</td>
<td>1 ) 2 ) 3 ) 4 ) 5 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. New vocabulary should be defined when encountered during content reading.</td>
<td>1 ) 2 ) 3 ) 4 ) 5 ) A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. Integrating the teaching of reading strategies into the content areas is necessary for increased comprehension.</td>
<td>1 ) 2 ) 3 ) 4 ) 5 ) A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. If interested in a reading assignment, students will want to talk about it after it is completed.</td>
<td>1 ) 2 ) 3 ) 4 ) 5 ) A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. Students must be taught how to read content area texts.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. Cooperative learning aids in the comprehension of information books.</td>
<td>1 ) 2 ) 3 ) 4 ) 5 ) A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. Stories are easier for beginning readers to understand than nonfiction or information books.</td>
<td>1 ) 2 ) 3 ) 4 ) 5 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. A teacher requires special training to teach students how to read content area materials such as textbooks.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>65. Students who have problems in content area reading probably need remediation.</td>
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<td>67. Reading instruction must be incorporated into all subject areas.</td>
<td>1 ) 2 ) 3 ) 4 ) 5 ) A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68. Students can understand information texts when they are read orally to them, even if they cannot read them individually.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>69. When given a choice, students will choose to read fiction instead of information books.</td>
<td>1 ) 2 ) 3 ) 4 ) 5 ) A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70. Textbooks are easier to read than nonfiction trade books, because they have a controlled vocabulary designed for the specific age of the child.</td>
<td>1 ) 2 ) 3 ) 4 ) 5 ) A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 71. Primary grade children can explain the differences between fiction and nonfiction. | 1 ) 2 ) 3 ) 4 ) 5 )
Rose


Attitudes Toward Content Area Reading (ATCAR):

Definition: Content area reading includes reading in subject-matter areas such as geography, history, mathematics, or science. Often expository in nature, content area text attempts to explain or to give information about a subject.

Instructions: Indicate your response to each of the following statements by filling in the appropriate number.

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<table>
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<tbody>
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<td>49.</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>51.</td>
<td>When students revise passages of text, their comprehension increases.</td>
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<tr>
<td>52.</td>
<td>Special materials are needed in order to teach students how to gain information from text.</td>
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56. The modeling of reading strategies has little effect on teaching students to read content area materials.

57. New vocabulary should be defined when encountered during content reading.

58. Integrating the teaching of reading strategies into the content areas is necessary for increased comprehension.

59. If interested in a reading assignment, students will want to talk about it after it is completed.

60. Students must be taught how to read content area texts.

61. Cooperative learning aids in the comprehension of information books.

62. Stories are easier for beginning readers to understand than nonfiction or information books.

63. A teacher requires special training to teach students how to read content area materials such as textbooks.

64. Before assigning content area reading to students, the teacher should first teach the students how to find information.

65. Students who have problems in content area reading probably need remediation.

66. The ability to understand narrative and expository text develops at the same time.

67. Reading instruction must be incorporated into all subject areas.

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70. Textbooks are easier to read than nonfiction trade books, because they have a controlled vocabulary designed for the specific age of the child.

71. Primary grade children can explain the differences between fiction and nonfiction.
John

Mary Howe (co-author) Reprinted with permission from Sirpa Grierson

Attitudes Toward Content Area Reading (ATCAR):

Definition: Content area reading includes reading in subject-matter areas such as geography, history, mathematics, or science. Often expository in nature, content area text attempts to explain or to give information about a subject.

Instructions: Indicate your response to each of the following statements by filling in the appropriate number.

Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Neutral = 3; Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5

1. Every teacher is a teacher of reading.
2. The teaching of strategies for reading information text are best taught as separate skills.
3. A slower rate of reading indicates that a student is having difficulty comprehending the text.
4. Content reading should be assigned for a specific purpose.
5. The teaching of reading should be limited to the language arts block.
6. Even very young students should understand how to find information in textbooks.
7. Pre-assessment of student's interests should direct content reading instruction.
8. Supplementary texts or less difficult materials are needed for students who read below grade level.
9. Open-ended questioning techniques are effective in increasing comprehension of informational passages.
10. When students revise passages of text, their comprehension increases.
11. Special materials are needed in order to teach students how to gain information from text.
12. Students should be able to choose the amount of reading that they will do for a class assignment.
13. Every subject area requires different reading strategies.
14. A teacher should first introduce an information book by discussing how it might be read most effectively.
Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Neutral = 3; Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5

56. The modeling of reading strategies has little effect on teaching students to read content area materials.
   
57. New vocabulary should be defined when encountered during content reading.
   
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69. When given a choice, students will choose to read fiction instead of information books.
   
70. Textbooks are easier to read than nonfiction trade books, because they have a controlled vocabulary designed for the specific age of the child.
   
71. Primary grade children can explain the differences between fiction and nonfiction.

1 2 3 4 5
APPENDIX K: LITERACY ORIENTATION SURVEY RESPONSES

Kelli

Literacy Orientation Survey (LOS)

Name: Kelli  Date: 

Directions: Read the following statements, and circle the response that indicates your feelings or behaviors regarding literacy and literacy instruction.

1. The purpose of reading instruction is to teach children to recognize words and to pronounce them correctly.
   - strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - strongly agree

2. When students read text, I ask them questions such as *What does it mean?*
   - never 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - always 5

3. Reading and writing are unrelated processes.
   - strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - strongly agree 5

4. When planning instruction, I take into account the needs of children by including activities that meet their social, emotional, physical, and affective needs.
   - never 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - always 5

5. Students should be treated as individual learners rather than as a group.
   - strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - strongly agree 5

6. I schedule time every day for self-selected reading and writing experiences.
   - never 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - always 5

7. Students should use "fix-up strategies" such as rereading when text meaning is unclear.
   - strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - strongly agree 5

---

8. Teachers should read aloud to students on a daily basis.

   strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree
   1-----------------------------------------------4

9. I encourage my students to monitor their comprehension as they read.

   never 2-3-4-5

10. I use a variety of prereading strategies with my students.

   never 2-3-4-5

11. It is not necessary for students to write text on a daily basis.

   strongly disagree disagree strongly agree
   1-----------------------------------------------5

12. Students should be encouraged to sound out all unknown words.

   strongly disagree disagree strongly agree
   1-----------------------------------------------5

13. The purpose of reading is to understand print.

   strongly disagree disagree strongly agree
   1-----------------------------------------------5

14. I hold parent workshops or send home newsletters with ideas about how parents can help their children with school.

   never 2-3-4-5

15. I organize my classroom so that my students have an opportunity to write in at least one subject every day.

   never 2-3-4-5

16. I ask the parents of my students to share their time, knowledge, and expertise in my classroom.

   never 2-3-4-5
17. Writers in my classroom generally move through the processes of prewriting, drafting, and revising.

   never 1 2 3 4 always 5

18. In my class, I organize reading, writing, speaking, and listening around key concepts.

   never 1 2 3 4 always 5

19. Reading instruction should always be delivered to the whole class at the same time.

   strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 strongly agree 5

20. I teach using themes or integrated units.

   never 1 2 3 4 always 5

21. Grouping for reading instruction should always be based on ability.

   strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 strongly agree 5

22. Subjects should be integrated across the curriculum.

   strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 strongly agree 5

23. I use a variety of grouping patterns to teach reading such as skill groups, interest groups, whole group, and individual instruction.

   never 1 2 3 4 always 5

24. Students need to write for a variety of purposes.

   strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 strongly agree 5

25. I take advantage of opportunities to learn about teaching by attending professional conferences and/or graduate classes and by reading professional journals.

   never 1 2 3 4 always 5
26. Parents attitudes toward literacy affect my students' progress.
   strongly disagree 2 strongly agree 5
   disagree 3 agree 4

27. The major purpose of reading assessment is to determine a student's placement in
   the basal reader.
   strongly disagree 2 strongly agree 5
   disagree 3 agree 4

28. I assess my students' reading progress primarily by teacher-made and/or book tests.
   never 1 always 5
   2 3 4

29. Parental reading habits in the home affect their children's attitudes toward reading.
   strongly disagree 2 strongly agree 5
   1 2 3 4

30. At the end of each day, I reflect on the effectiveness of my instructional decisions.
   never 1 always 5
   2 3 4

Please answer the following questions about yourself.

a. What do you teach?  

b. How many years have you taught? 2

c. What is your highest degree or hours beyond your highest degree? 8

d. Would you characterize your school as urban, suburban, or rural? 1

e. Do you belong to any professional organizations? If so, which ones?
Literacy Orientation Survey (LOS)

Directions: Read the following statements, and circle the response that indicates your feelings or behaviors regarding literacy and literacy instruction.

1. The purpose of reading instruction is to teach children to recognize words and to pronounce them correctly.
   - strongly disagree    - strongly agree
   1-2-3-4-5

2. When students read text, I ask them questions such as "What does it mean?"
   - never    - always
   1-2-3-4-5

3. Reading and writing are unrelated processes.
   - strongly disagree    - strongly agree
   1-2-3-4-5

4. When planning instruction, I take into account the needs of children by including activities that meet their social, emotional, physical, and affective needs.
   - never    - always
   1-2-3-4-5

5. Students should be treated as individual learners rather than as a group.
   - strongly disagree    - strongly agree
   1-2-3-4-5

6. I schedule time every day for self-selected reading and writing experiences.
   - never    - always
   1-2-3-4-5

7. Students should use "fix-up strategies" such as rereading when text meaning is unclear.
   - strongly disagree    - strongly agree
   1-2-3-4-5

8. Teachers should read aloud to students on a [daily basis].
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9. I encourage my students to monitor their comprehension as they read.
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>never</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

10. I use a variety of prereading strategies with my students.
    
    | never | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | always |
    |-------|---|---|---|---|--------|

11. It is not necessary for students to write text on a daily basis.
    
    | strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | strongly agree |
    |-------------------|---|---|---|---|----------------|

12. Students should be encouraged to sound out all unknown words.
    
    | strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | strongly agree |
    |-------------------|---|---|---|---|----------------|

13. The purpose of reading is to understand print.
    
    | strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | strongly agree |
    |-------------------|---|---|---|---|----------------|

14. I hold parent workshops or send home newsletters with ideas about how parents can help their children with school.
    
    | never | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | always |
    |-------|---|---|---|---|--------|

15. I organize my classroom so that my students have an opportunity to write in at least one subject every day.  
    
    | never | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | always |
    |-------|---|---|---|---|--------|

16. I ask the parents of my students to share their time, knowledge, and expertise in my classroom.
    
    | never | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | always |
    |-------|---|---|---|---|--------|
17. Writers in my classroom generally move through the processes of prewriting, drafting, and revising.
   
   never 2 3 4 always
   1

18. In my class, I organize reading, writing, speaking, and listening around key concepts.
   
   never 2 3 4 always
   1

19. Reading instruction should always be delivered to the whole class at the same time.
   
   strongly disagree 2 3 4 strongly agree
   1

20. I teach using themes or integrated units.
   
   never 2 3 4 always
   1

21. Grouping for reading instruction should always be based on ability.
   
   strongly disagree 2 3 4 strongly agree
   1

22. Subjects should be integrated across the curriculum.
   
   strongly disagree 2 3 4 strongly agree
   1

23. I use a variety of grouping patterns to teach reading such as skill groups, interest groups, whole group, and individual instruction.
   
   never 2 3 4 always
   1

24. Students need to write for a variety of purposes.
   
   strongly disagree 2 3 4 strongly agree
   1

25. I take advantage of opportunities to learn about teaching by attending professional conferences and/or graduate classes and by reading professional journals.
   
   never 2 3 4 always
   1
26. Parents attitudes toward literacy affect my students' progress.
   strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 strongly agree 5
   [Marked: Agree]

27. The major purpose of reading assessment is to determine a student's placement in the basal reader.
   strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 strongly agree 5
   [Marked: NA (Not Applicable)]

28. I assess my students' reading progress primarily by teacher-made and/or book tests.
   never 1 2 3 4 always 5
   [Marked: NA (Not Applicable)]

29. Parental reading habits in the home affect their children's attitudes toward reading.
   strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 strongly agree 5
   [Marked: Agree]

30. At the end of each day, I reflect on the effectiveness of my instructional decisions.
    never 1 2 3 always 4 5
    [Marked: Always]

Please answer the following questions about yourself.

a. What do you teach? **Science: Physical Science**

b. How many years have you taught? 27

c. What is your highest degree or hours beyond your highest degree? MA + 30

d. Would you characterize your school as urban, suburban, or rural? Rural

e. Do you belong to any professional organizations? If so, which ones? NEA, OEA,
   LECTA, Professional High School Counselor Ass.,
   High School Athletic Association - Tennis Coach
   MCTA -
John

Literacy Orientation Survey (LOS)

Name: John  Date: 2/10/06

Directions: Read the following statements, and circle the response that indicates your feelings or behaviors regarding literacy and literacy instruction.

1. The purpose of reading instruction is to teach children to recognize words and to pronounce them correctly.
   - strongly disagree
   - agree
   1 2 3 4 5

2. When students read text, I ask them questions such as "What does it mean?"
   - never
   - always
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Reading and writing are unrelated processes.
   - strongly disagree
   - agree
   1 2 3 4 5

4. When planning instruction, I take into account the needs of children by including activities that meet their social, emotional, physical, and affective needs.
   - never
   - always
   1 2 3 4 5

5. Students should be treated as individual learners rather than as a group.
   - strongly disagree
   - agree
   1 2 3 4 5

6. I schedule time every day for self-selected reading and writing experiences.
   - never
   - always
   1 2 3 4 5

7. Students should use "fix-up strategies" such as rereading when text meaning is unclear.
   - strongly disagree
   - agree
   1 2 3 4 5

---

8. Teachers should read aloud to students on a daily basis.

strongly

agree

2 3 4

9. I encourage my students to monitor their comprehension as they read.

never

always

2 3 4

10. I use a variety of prereading strategies with my students.

never

always

2 3 4

11. It is not necessary for students to write text on a daily basis.

strongly

disagree

2 3 4

12. Students should be encouraged to sound out all unknown words.

strongly

disagree

2 3 4

13. The purpose of reading is to understand print.

strongly

disagree

2 3 4

14. I hold parent workshops or send home newsletters with ideas about how parents can help their children with school.

never

always

2 3 4

15. I organize my classroom so that my students have an opportunity to write in at least one subject every day.

never

always

2 3 4

16. I ask the parents of my students to share their time, knowledge, and expertise in my classroom.

never

always

2 3 4
17. Writers in my classroom generally move through the processes of prewriting, drafting, and revising.

never 2 3 4 always 5

18. In my class, I organize reading, writing, speaking, and listening around key concepts.

never 1 2 3 4 always 5

19. Reading instruction should always be delivered to the whole class at the same time.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 strongly agree 5

20. I teach using themes or integrated units.

never 1 2 3 4 always 5

21. Grouping for reading instruction should always be based on ability.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 strongly agree 5

22. Subjects should be integrated across the curriculum.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 strongly agree 5

23. I use a variety of grouping patterns to teach reading such as skill groups, interest groups, whole group, and individual instruction.

never 1 2 3 4 always 5

24. Students need to write for a variety of purposes.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 strongly agree 5

25. I take advantage of opportunities to learn about teaching by attending professional conferences and/or graduate classes and by reading professional journals.

never 1 2 3 4 always 5
26. Parents attitudes toward literacy affect my students' progress.
   
   strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5
   strongly agree

27. The major purpose of reading assessment is to determine a student's placement in the basal reader.
   
   strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5
   strongly agree

28. I assess my students' reading progress primarily by teacher-made and/or book tests.
   
   never 1 2 3 4 5
   always

29. Parental reading habits in the home affect their children's attitudes toward reading.
   
   strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5
   strongly agree

30. At the end of each day, I reflect on the effectiveness of my instructional decisions.
   
   never 1 2 3 4 5
   always

---

Please answer the following questions about yourself.

a. What do you teach? Sophomore Social Studies
b. How many years have you taught? 18

c. What is your highest degree or hours beyond your highest degree? Masters + 30

d. Would you characterize your school as urban, suburban, or rural? Rural

e. Do you belong to any professional organizations? If so, which ones? No
## APPENDIX L: LITERACY ORIENTATION SURVEY SCORING SHEETS

### Kelli

**Literacy Orientation Survey (LOS) Scoring Sheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher's Name</th>
<th>Kelli</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>3-1-06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Directions:** Place the number of your answer in the space provided. Recode answers for items with an asterisk (*).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 3</td>
<td>2 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>2 4</td>
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<td>4 3</td>
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<td>3 3</td>
<td>33 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>8 3</td>
<td>30 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Beliefs score:** 51  
**Practices score:** 34

**Total score:** 85

*Recode Scale*  
1 = 5  2 = 4  3 = 3  4 = 2  5 = 1

---

Interpreting Your LOS Score

1. Plot your Total Score on the line.

   95 100 105 110 115 120 125 130 135 140 145
   traditional teacher  eclectic teacher  constructivist teacher

2. If your score is in the 90-110 range, you are most likely a traditional teacher.
   If your score is in the 110-125 range, you are most likely an eclectic teacher.
   If your score is in the 125-145 range, you are most likely a constructivist teacher.

3. Plot your Beliefs Score on the line.

   45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72

4. If your score is closest to 51, you have beliefs similar to a traditional teacher.
   If your score is closest to 61, you have beliefs similar to an eclectic teacher.
   If your score is closest to 69, you have beliefs similar to a constructivist teacher.

5. Plot your Practice Score on the line.

   45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72

6. If your score is closest to 51, you have practices similar to a traditional teacher.
   If your score is closest to 56, you have practices similar to an eclectic teacher.
   If your score is closest to 63, you have practices similar to a constructivist teacher.

7. List your Beliefs Score: 51. List your Practice Score: 51.

8. If your Beliefs Score is higher than your Practice Score, you have not yet found a way to incorporate your constructivist beliefs in your classroom.

   If your Practice Score is higher than your Beliefs Score, you need to think about why you make the instructional decisions that you do.

Definitions of teaching practices:

Traditional teacher  * uses traditional reading methods such as basal reading instruction
                    * teaches using primarily direct instruction
                    * views students as "vessels to be filled"

Eclectic teacher    * uses some traditional and some constructivist reading methods
                    * frequently "basalizes" literature selections
                    * combines traditional and constructivist views about student learning

Constructivist teacher * uses whole text and integrated instruction
                        * teaches using primarily an inquiry approach
                        * views students as using prior knowledge to construct meaning to learn
# Rose

## Literacy Orientation Survey (LOS) Scoring Sheet

| Teacher's Name | Rose | Date | 3-1-06 |

**Directions:** Place the number of your answer in the space provided. Recode answers for items with an asterisk (*).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>Practices</th>
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<td>*3.</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>7.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>*11.</td>
<td>1/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*12.</td>
<td>4/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*19.</td>
<td>3/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*21.</td>
<td>Don't teach reading 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*27.</td>
<td>NA 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>5</td>
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**Beliefs score:** 51

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>23.</td>
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<td>25.</td>
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<tr>
<td>*28.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practices score:** 34/35

**Total score:** 85/86

---

**Recodeing Scale:**

| 1 = 5 | 2 = 4 | 3 = 3 | 4 = 2 | 5 = 1 |

---

Interpreting Your LOS Score

1. Plot your total score on the line.

2. If your score is in the 90-110 range, you are most likely a traditional teacher.
   If your score is in the 110-123 range, you are most likely an eclectic teacher.
   If your score is in the 125-145 range, you are most likely a constructivist teacher.

3. Plot your beliefs score on the line.

4. If your score is closest to 51, you have beliefs similar to a traditional teacher.
   If your score is closest to 61, you have beliefs similar to an eclectic teacher.
   If your score is closest to 69, you have beliefs similar to a constructivist teacher.

5. Plot your practice score on the line.

6. If your score is closest to 51, you have practices similar to a traditional teacher.
   If your score is closest to 56, you have practices similar to an eclectic teacher.
   If your score is closest to 63, you have practices similar to a constructivist teacher.

7. List your beliefs score _______ List your practice score _______.

8. If your beliefs score is higher than your practice score, you have not yet found a way to incorporate your constructivist beliefs in your classroom.
   If your practice score is higher than your beliefs score, you need to think about why you make the instructional decisions that you do.

Definitions of teaching practices

Traditional teacher
* uses traditional reading methods such as basal reading instruction
* teaches using primarily direct instruction
* views students as "vessels to be filled"

Eclectic teacher
* uses some traditional and some constructivist reading methods
* frequently "besides" literature selections
* combines traditional and constructivist views about student learning

Constructivist teacher
* uses whole text and integrated instruction
* teaches using primarily an inquiry approach
* views students as using prior knowledge to construct meaning to learn
Literacy Orientation Survey (LOS) Scoring Sheet

Teacher's Name: John  Date: 3-1-06

Directions: Place the number of your answer in the space provided. Recode answers for items with an asterisk (*).

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>Practices</th>
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<td>*27. 2</td>
<td>*28. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. 5</td>
<td>30. 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beliefs score: 52  Practices score: 36

Total score: 88

*Recoding Scale  1 = 5  2 = 4  3 = 3  4 = 2  5 = 1

Interpreting Your LOS Score

1. Plot your Total Score on the line.

2. If your score is in the 90-110 range, you are most likely a traditional teacher.
   If your score is in the 110-125 range, you are most likely an eclectic teacher.
   If your score is in the 125-145 range, you are most likely a constructivist teacher.

3. Plot your Beliefs Score on the line.

4. If your score is closest to 51, you have beliefs similar to a traditional teacher.
   If your score is closest to 61, you have beliefs similar to an eclectic teacher.
   If your score is closest to 69, you have beliefs similar to a constructivist teacher.

5. Plot your Practice Score on the line.

6. If your score is closest to 51, you have practices similar to a traditional teacher.
   If your score is closest to 63, you have practices similar to an eclectic teacher.
   If your score is closest to 69, you have practices similar to a constructivist teacher.

7. List your Beliefs Score 52  List your Practice Score 36

8. If your Beliefs Score is higher than your Practice Score, you have not yet found a way to incorporate your constructivist beliefs in your classroom.
   If your Practice Score is higher than your Beliefs Score, you need to think about why you make the instructional decisions that you do.

Definitions of teaching practices:

Traditional teacher
* uses traditional reading methods such as basal reading instruction
* teaches using primarily direct instruction
* views students as "vessels to be filled"

Eclectic teacher
* uses some traditional and some constructivist reading methods
* frequently "basilizes" literature selections
* combines traditional and constructivist views about student learning

Constructivist teacher
* uses whole text and integrated instruction
* teaches using primarily an inquiry approach
* views students as using prior knowledge to construct meaning to learn
APPENDIX M: REQUEST TO TEACHERS TO COMPLETE UPDATED SURVEYS

2-12-06

Dear Teachers,

First, I wanted to say thank you so much for filling out the surveys for me. I really appreciate your help and support! I want to thank you for your helpful comments you made on my surveys. I apologize for the misalignment. I asked the author, Sirpa Grierson, to send me legible updated copies of the surveys and she must not have realized the misalignment occurred. I have replaced them with surveys from her original study.

I wanted to assure you again that your names will in no way be connected to your comments. I only needed your name so I knew who was willing to let me come in and observe. Also, one of the surveys was called A Questionnaire for Primary Grade Teachers. This was a survey developed by Sirpa Grierson. I talked with her and she said the surveys were appropriate for secondary teachers as well. That’s why it was included in the packet.

I would really appreciate it if you could fill out the two updated surveys again to promote reliability with these instruments. Then seal the surveys in the manila envelope and return to Mrs. by Friday, February 17th. Please make sure you pick up another candy bar from the secretary for your extra work in completing the surveys again.

Thanks again for your help and I’m sorry about the inconvenience.

Amy Kabel
February 26, 2006

Dear ________________,

I went through my surveys over the weekend and noticed I am still missing yours. If you could complete these and return them to me this week in an inneroffice envelope, I would really appreciate it! If you do not wish to complete the surveys, please write me a note on this sheet and return it in an inneroffice envelope to ________________. Thanks so much for all your time and support! I really appreciate all you help!

Amy Kabel
February 28, 2006

Dear ____________________,

As I was looking through my surveys, I noticed that you have not completed all parts of the survey. The chairperson of my committee asked me to try to get all parts of the survey completed in their entirety. I know you are very busy and I hate to put more on your plate, but if you could finish completing the rest of the survey for me, I would really appreciate it! When you are done, please inneroffice them back to me at _____________________. If you wish not to finish the survey, just make a note on the bottom of this paper and I will pass that information on to my committee chairman. Thanks again for all your time and help!

Amy Kabel
APPENDIX O: NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION FOR OBSERVATION

Kelli

February 16, 2006

Dear Kelli,

I conducted my random sampling tonight and you have been chosen to be a participant in my study. I will start my observations the week of Tuesday, February 21st. Since I will also be observing two other teachers at your school, I will be rotating days for my observations. I will get you a calendar for the months of February through May so you know when to expect my visits. The week of February 21st I will be in your room on Wednesday, February 22 from 7:30 to 8:10 a.m. Again, I appreciate you agreeing to be in my study. You will receive a $20.00 gift certificate at the end of the study for your time. If you have any questions feel free to call me at or home at

Amy Kabel
February 16, 2006

Dear Rose,

I conducted my random sampling tonight and you have been chosen to be a participant in my study. I will start my observations the week of Tuesday, February 21st. Since I will also be observing two other teachers at your school, I will be rotating days for my observations. I will get you a calendar for the months of February through May so you know when to expect my visits. The week of February 21st I will be in your room on Tuesday, February 21st and Friday, February 24th from 7:30 to 8:10 a.m. Again, I appreciate you agreeing to be in my study. You will receive a $20.00 gift certificate at the end of the study for your time. If you have any questions feel free to call me at or home at

Amy Kabel
February 16, 2006

Dear John,

I conducted my random sampling tonight and you have been chosen to be a participant in my study. I will start my observations the week of Tuesday, February 21st. Since I will also be observing two other teachers at your school, I will be rotating days for my observations. I will get you a calendar for the months of February through May so you know when to expect my visits. The week of February 21st I will be in your room on Thursday, February 23 from 7:30 to 8:10 a.m. Again, I appreciate you agreeing to be in my study. You will receive a $20.00 gift certificate at the end of the study for your time. If you have any questions feel free to call me at or home at

Amy Kabel
February 16, 2006

Dear Mrs. 

I wanted to remind you that I will be starting my observations at your high school on Tuesday, February 21st. I conducted my random sampling tonight and the following are the teachers who were chosen to be in my study:

I have also sent them letters as well to let them know they have been chosen to be in my study and remind them when I will be starting. I also let the teachers know I would be in their rooms from 7:30-8:10 a.m. Since I will be observing three teachers at your school, I will be rotating days for my observations. I will get you a calendar for the months of February through May so you know where I will be during my visits. Again, I thank you for your cooperation and support with my study. If you have any questions feel free to call me at or home at

Amy Kabel
February 28, 2006

Dear ________________,

After the pressure of the OGT is over, I would like to conduct some interviews with you. Please look over your schedule and let me know what time, day, and date works for you. I can meet you wherever you would like and where is most convenient for you. I would also like to borrow your lesson plan book (from the beginning of the year up to the week of February 20th) for a day or weekend to help me triangulate the data in my study. Thank you again for all your help with my study. My study would not be possible without all your help and support!

Thank you,

Amy Kabel
March 20, 2006

Rose,

I wanted to reassure you that all the information you give me will remain confidential and I will not use your name in any way. I only asked for names to help me keep things organized, not for reporting purposes.

Thanks for the information you sent me through inner-office mail. I would like the exam review and assignments from January 3 to January 23rd that you asked me about. (Thank you) May I also borrow a copy of the textbook and the OGT book to look at? I would really appreciate it.

Also, please let me know when a good time would be for me to interview you for my study. I will work around your schedule, so it is convenient to you. Just contact me through inner-office mail, work or home at

Thanks,

Amy Kabel
March 21, 2006

John,

I hope you enjoyed the snow day we had today. I did! It was a nice surprise. I wanted to ask you today when would be good to interview you for my study. I will work around your schedule so it is most convenient for you. Also, if you have your CARS Survey completed you can send it to me through inner-office mail to If you do not want to complete the survey, just let me know that too so I remember not to ask you about it anymore.

Thanks for your time !

Amy Kabel

P.S. Could I observe you on Monday, May 22nd to make up for the snow day we had today?
APPENDIX S: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Consent Form

My name is Amy Kabel and I am a student at Ohio University. I am conducting a study in content area reading during the 2005-2006 school year. I am also a teacher at Schools at the elementary level. This project will be conducted through interviews and classroom observations. There are no known risks in this study. To prevent vulnerability in what is said during the course of the interview, information will only be shared with my committee members and a possible transcriptionist. Anonymity may be given by allowing participants the option of choosing a pseudonym to be used.

I certify that I have read and understand the consent form and I agree to participate as a subject in the research described. I also understand what my researcher is allowed and not allowed to keep confidential. I agree that known risks to me have been explained to my satisfaction and I understand that no compensation is available from Ohio University and its employees for any injury resulting from my part in this research. I understand that I will receive a small token from the researcher for giving up my time to participate in the study. I certify that I am at least 18 years old. My participation in this research is given voluntarily. I understand that I have the right to review documents of this process. I also understand that I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of any benefits to which I may otherwise be entitled. I agree to have my interviews taped by audiotape and used in this study. I certify that I have been given a copy of this consent form to take with me. If you have any questions about the research process you can talk to Dr. at

Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Printed Name ___________________________ Pseudonym ___________________________
APPENDIX T: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

1. Tell me your name and your job description.

2. What is your educational background and teaching experiences? (probe about content area reading classes).

3. How have your teaching experiences shaped your teaching?

4. Describe an average day of school.

5. What negative aspects does your job entail?

6. What kind of assistance do you have in your classroom to help students?

7. What kinds of in-services does your school provide to help you as a teacher?

8. How do you teach your subject area and what factors guide your class curriculum?

9. How much of your day is made up of reading activities?

10. How do you know the reading abilities of the students in your classroom?

11. What does it feel like to teach reading?

12. What are your experiences with reading?

13. How did you learn to read?
14. Share any difficulties you have had with the process of reading.

15. Share some favorite books you have read.

16. What materials do you use to help you with instruction? (Probe about textbooks)

17. What strategies do you teach your students and what methods do you use?

18. Is there anything else you would like to share?

I appreciate you sharing your teaching experiences and time with me. It helps me get a better understanding of reading and how it is taught at the junior high/high school level.

Can I contact you if I have any follow up questions? You have my number so you can contact me if you think of anything you want to add.

Would you like me to send you a copy of my notes when they are typed up so you can see if I have been clear on what you have said, or to add information if there is anything you forgot to say?
Other Possible Interview Questions

19. What is the principal’s role in content area reading?

20. If you use textbooks, how do they meet your students’ needs?

21. Does anyone require you to teach reading in the content area?

22. What would your students say if they were asked how they are taught reading in your classroom?

23. Tell me as much as possible about yourself in light of the topic up to the present time and how you came to be a teacher.

24. Whose job is it to teach reading?

25. Discuss what I would probably see if I walked into a content area classroom to observe a teacher engaging students in a lesson.

26. How would you describe the relationship between you and your students?

27. Where do you see yourself going in the future?

28. What kind of assistance are you given as a teacher?
29. Are inservices voluntary? How have your students benefited? How did you feel after the inservice compared to before the inservice?

30. What is your definition of reading in the content areas?

31. What does teaching reading in the content area look like in your classroom?

32. What challenges have you faced in trying to teach reading in the content areas? How did you overcome these challenges?

33. What teachers do you remember? How are those memories helpful to you?

34. What do you see your job as a teacher being?

35. What are the parts of teaching you are especially good at?

36. What are the parts of teaching you are not good at?

37. What does it mean to be a teacher?
Interview Questions #3

1. I was wondering if you could tell me more about skinnies and compare them to block scheduling that you were on before. Tell me the pros and cons and which one you like better out of the two.

2. Can you show me your teaching materials and your lesson Plans and talk to me about how they exemplify your approach to teaching?
APPENDIX U: THANK YOU LETTERS WITH FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

Kelli

March 30, 2006

Dear Kelli,

I just wanted to thank you for allowing me to interview you for my class. I really enjoyed your interview. It helped me gain the perspective of teaching reading in the content areas at the high school level.

I had a couple follow-up questions from our interview. They include:

1. What is the tutoring period that you discussed in the interview?

2. What does it feel like to teach reading?

3. Where did you get the idea for the hallway displays? May I have copies of them?

You can send me your responses through inner-office mail, email (___ ___ ___ ___), or in person on my daily visits. Thanks again for your time!

Amy Kabel
April 4, 2006

Dear Rose,

I just wanted to thank you for allowing me to interview you for my study. I really enjoyed your interview. It helped me gain the perspective of teaching reading in the content areas at the high school level.

I had a couple follow up questions from our interview. They include:

1. You said you are on a block schedule. Please compare this to the way a regular schedule works, along with your preference and reasoning.

2. You mentioned in class that this is the first time you let the students use their sig fig formulas. Please explain the reasoning.

3. Please explain how it feels to teach the same subject area three blocks in a row.

You can send me your responses through inner-office mail to Laurelville. Thanks again for your time! Sorry for keeping you so late the other night. I really enjoyed our interview!

Amy Kabel
Rose's Response

Block schedule keeps students for 1 hr and 20 minutes. At some times, it drag on. Students lose interest. Sometimes, it is difficult to learn so many concepts in such a short time.

Advantages:
- Teacher can have long-term projects and longer periods of time for lab experiments.

Disadvantages:
- By the end of the day, it loses the excitement.

Disadvantages: May be 180 students, notes for lots of grading, too much paper. Block 2, down to 75 students in the block.

Preference is regular schedule. Significant figure issue this because they had not used the rules enough to be able to calculate the answers correctly. Even with the rules, they still miss the problems.

We need more practice. I had focused on the 067 questions, and had not given them enough practice.

It is no problem to teach the same subject 3 times. I usually vary it slightly to keep it more interesting. It is much better than 8 times.

Thanks for the grandson. Keep the cards. You are very kind. Sincerely,
April 5, 2006

Dear John,

I just wanted to thank you for allowing me to interview you for my study. I really enjoyed your interview. It helped me gain the perspective of teaching reading in the content areas at the high school level.

If you have any further comments that you would like to share with me, you can e-mail me at

Thanks,

Amy Kabel
APPENDIX V: OBSERVATIONS SCHEDULE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Rose</td>
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<td>Kelli</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td></td>
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<td>27</td>
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</table>

- **June**: Trademark Day
- **June**: No observations this week
- **June**: School end
APPENDIX W: THANK YOU NOTES TO PARTICIPANTS

Kelli

2/22/06

Dear Kelli,

I just wanted to thank you for agreeing to let me come in and observe you. I’ve really enjoyed the classroom observations and appreciate you welcoming me into your classroom. Also, thank you for the copies you have provided me to go along with your lessons. They are greatly appreciated!

Thanks again,

Amy Kabel
2/22/06

Dear Rose,

I just wanted to thank you for agreeing to let me come in and observe you. I’ve really enjoyed the classroom observations and appreciate you welcoming me into your classroom. Also, thank you for the copies you have provided me to go along with your lessons. They are greatly appreciated!

Thanks again,

Amy Kabel

P.S. Do you need the copies back you gave me, or are they mine to keep?
Dear John,

I just wanted to thank you for agreeing to let me come in and observe you. I’ve really enjoyed the classroom observations and appreciate you welcoming me into your classroom. Also, thank you for the copies you have provided me to go along with your lessons. They are greatly appreciated!

Thanks again,

Amy Kabel

P.S. If you get time would you be able to complete the 2nd survey I passed out this weekend? It would be very beneficial to my study since you are one of the participants I am observing. If you need longer than the weekend, or need a new survey, just let me know and I will get another to you. Thank you so much!
APPENDIX X: CLARIFICATIONS OF OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

--- Original Message ---
From: Sirpa Grierson
To: Paul Kabel
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2006 6:48 PM
Subject: A couple more questions about observation checklist

Sirpa,

I'm sorry to keep bothering you, but I was wondering if you could explain the terms "models efferent reading" and "models aesthetic reading" to me.

Thanks again for all your help and support!

Amy Kabel

3/26/2006
Paul Kabel

From:
To:
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2006 9:57 PM
Subject: Re: A couple more questions about observation checklist

Sirpa,

Thanks again for your help!

Amy Kabel

--- Original Message ---
From: Sirpa Grierson
To: Paul Kabel
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2006 2:59 PM
Subject: RE: A couple more questions about observation checklist

Hi Amy,

Really, efferent reading is more of the stance that you take when reading. You can read a popular book such as Angels and Demons by Dan Brown taking either or alternating between both stances – aesthetic and efferent. While employing the first, you would look at the text as to what information you might gain from it – i.e., ideas about the Roman Catholic Church or about quantum physics. In the second, you would be reading more for entertainment; the artistic response to the text. In your examples, I suppose that I would check efferent still because the student reads in both cases to look for information in order to solve a problem.

Have a great day!
Sirpa

Sirpa Grierson, Ph.D.

--- Original Message ---
From: Paul Kabel
Sent: Sunday, March 26, 2006 10:09 AM
To: Sirpa Grierson
Subject: Re: A couple more questions about observation checklist

Sirpa,

Thank you for getting back with me so quickly. I really appreciate it! I was wondering if the efferent reading is just for when a student is reading text and answering questions. I have also observed teachers giving story problems and tests where they are also doing informational reading, but the answer is not there for them. I'm not sure whether to check efferent reading for these two examples or not. Thanks for your time and support!

Amy Kabel

--- Original Message ---

3/27/2006
From: Sirpa Glierson  
To: Amy Kabel  
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2006 10:10 PM  
Subject: RE: A couple more questions about observation checklist

Hi Amy,

I would be happy to. The terms are based upon the work of Louise Rosenblatt whose transactional theory of reading is sometimes (incorrectly) referred to as Rosenblatt Response theory. Transaction indicates that the text does not just inform a reader, but that during the act of reading, what the reader knows and thinks also informs the event—creating a two-way interaction or “transaction.” Rosenblatt taught us that efferent reading comes from the Latin root, effere, meaning to carry away. It refers to reading that we do for information-gaining purposes—usually the type of reading we do when we read expository text. Aesthetic reading on the other hand, refers to reading that elicits an aesthetic, pleasurable or artistic (appreciative) response (like reading The Da Vinci Code or a Harlequin romance. You could look for a brief synopsis of her work in a book review I wrote in NCTE English (I can’t remember exactly when, but perhaps November of last year.

Again, glad to help!

Sirpa

From:  
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2006 6:48 PM  
To: Sirpa Glierson  
Subject: A couple more questions about observation checklist

Sirpa,

I'm sorry to keep bothering you, but I was wondering if you could explain the terms "models efferent reading" and "models aesthetic reading" to me.

Thanks again for all your help and support!

Amy Kabel
Paul Kabel

From: Paul Kabel
To: [Recipient]
Sent: Monday, April 03, 2006 5:53 PM
Subject: RE: Question About Observation Checklist

Hi Amy, here is an attachment with Reitzel and Cooter's pyramid of experiences from most abstract to most concrete. Hope this helps.

Sirpa

Sirpa Grierson, Ph.D.

From: Sirpa Grierson
Sent: Sunday, April 02, 2006 9:31 AM
To: Sirpa Grierson
Subject: Question About Observation Checklist

Sirpa,

I was wondering if you could explain abstract and concrete experiences for me so I can understand the difference between the two. Thank you again for your time!

Amy Kabel
Pyramid of Classroom Experiences

Concrete Experiences

- Perform a "hands-on" task or activity
- Stage a simulation of the concept under study
- Literature response activities - (student dramas, construct games, dioramas, etc.)
- Role Play or dramatization
- Experiment, demonstrate, or investigate
- Field trips
- Participate in a debate
- Related independent readings - Fiction / nonfiction
- Participate in a discussion
- Read for information in a textbook
- Write a summary of readings and research
- Complete a categorization exercise
- Watch a demonstration on video
- Listen to a guest speaker
- View still pictures
- Listen to an audio recording
- Have a question - and - answer session
- Read and answer questions
- Look up vocabulary words

Abstract Experiences

APPENDIX Y: CONTENT AREA READING OBSERVATION CHECKLISTS

Kelli

March–May 2006

CONTENT AREA READING OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF TEACHER:</th>
<th>Kelli</th>
<th>OBSERVER’S NAME:</th>
<th>Amy Koell</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GRADE LEVEL:</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>DATE:</td>
<td>February-May 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCHOOL:</td>
<td>High School</td>
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I. TEACHER BEHAVIOR

Choice of Reading Material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uses information-based text</th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses literature-based text</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses textbook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows time for reading (RRR)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points out text pattern signals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows students to organize reading tasks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses expository text structure</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Preparation

Uses content area strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assess student interests</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-assess student knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses pre-reading strategies</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Skills-centered approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy-centered approach</th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previous vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks higher-order questions to stimulate thought</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin with what students already know</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models a reading strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activates and focuses student reading</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allisons students to select reading tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outlines expectations about reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lets students assume responsibility for reading</td>
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</table>
### TEACHER BEHAVIOR (CONT.)

#### During Reading
- Uses content area strategies
- Models efficient reading
- Models aesthetic reading
- Uses concrete experiences
- Uses abstract experiences
- Asks higher-order questions
- Increases students in text
- Engages children's interest
- Accepts approximations
- Models thinking strategies

#### Postreading
- Uses content area strategies
- Uses postreading strategies
- Integrates topic into curriculum
- Reviews learning
- Models problem-solving
- Discusses problems
- Reinforces learning through review
- Integrates new knowledge into old
- Offers feedback
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Behavior</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Works alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works in a group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works with whole class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seems engaged in reading task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers questions thoughtfully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans reading tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitors own reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluates own reading</td>
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Some notes on the table:
- Same behavior any reading going on.
- Story problem.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT AREA READING OBSERVATION CHECKLIST</th>
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<td><strong>SCHOOL:</strong></td>
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### I. TEACHER BEHAVIOR

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Choice of Reading Material</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses information-based text</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses literature-based text</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows time for reading (SS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Points out text pattern signals</td>
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<td>Allows students to organize reading tasks</td>
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<td>Uses expository text structure</td>
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### II. PREREADING

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<td>Pre-assess student knowledge</td>
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<td>Use prereading strategies</td>
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<td>Previous vocabulary</td>
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<td>Asks higher-order questions to stimulate thought</td>
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<td>Activates and focuses student reading</td>
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<td>Allows students to select reading tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outlines expectations about reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lets students assume responsibility for reading</td>
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<td><strong>TEACHER BEHAVIOR (CONT.)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>During Reading</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses context area strategies</td>
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<td>Models different reading</td>
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<td>Models aesthetic reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses concrete experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses abstract experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asks higher-order questions</td>
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<td>Engages children's interest</td>
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<td>Accepts approximations</td>
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<td>Models thinking strategies</td>
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<td><strong>Postreading</strong></td>
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<td>Reviews learning</td>
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### 1. TEACHER BEHAVIOR

#### Choice of Reading Material

- Uses information-based text: ✔️
- Uses literature-based text: ✔️
- Uses textbook: ✔️
- Allows time for reading (SSR): ✔️
- Points out text pattern signals: ✔️
- Allows students to organize reading tasks: ✔️
- Uses expository text structure: ✔️

#### Prewriting

- Uses content area strategies: ✔️
- Assesses student interests: ✔️
- Pre-assesses student knowledge: ✔️
- Uses prewriting strategies: ✔️
- Skills-centered approach: ✔️
- Literary-centered approach: ✔️
- Prepares vocabulary: ✔️
- Asks higher-order questions to stimulate thought: ✔️
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</table>

**Legend:**
- ✔: Observed
- X: Not observed
- D: Did not observe or predict
- W: Will do

**Note:** There is a handwritten note on the image that reads: "DD PND = Didn't observe, predict will do."
### II. STUDENT BEHAVIOR

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May 2006

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<tr>
<td>Evaluates own reading</td>
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John

February–March 2006

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<td>Choice of Reading Material</td>
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<td>Uses literature-based text</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses textbook</td>
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<td>Allows time for reading (60%)</td>
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<td>Assess student interests</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses pre-reading strategies</td>
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<td>Literacy-centered approach</td>
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<td>Adds higher-order questions to stimulate thought</td>
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<td>Begin with what students already know</td>
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<td>Uses pre-reading strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrates topic into curriculum</td>
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<td>Reviews learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Models problem-solving</td>
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<td>Discusses problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reinforces learning through review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrates new knowledge into-old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offers feedback</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Assuming I will do
| IL Student Behavior          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Works alone                 | X |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Works in a group            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Works with whole class      | X |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Asks questions              |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Seems engaged in reading task |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Demonstrates understanding  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Answers questions thoughtfully |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Plans reading tasks         |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Monitors own reading        |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Evaluates own reading       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

The table above shows a list of reading tasks with a checkmark in each task that is completed.
### CONTENT AREA READING OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

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<thead>
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<th>Choice of Reading Material</th>
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<td>Uses literature-based test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows time for reading (TBR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points out text pattern signals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows students to organize reading tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses expository text structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses content area strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assesses student interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assesses student knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses pre-reading strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills-centered approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy-centered approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks higher-order questions to stimulate thought</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NAME OF TEACHER:** John  
**DATE:** 5/28/06  
**SCHOOL DISTRICT:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begin with what students already know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models a reading strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities and focuses student reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow students to select reading tasks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Outlines expectations about reading</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lets students assume responsibility for reading</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TEACHER BEHAVIOR (CONT.)

#### During Reading
- Uses context area strategies
- Models different reading
- Models aesthetic reading
- Uses concrete experiences
- Uses abstract experiences
- Asks higher-order questions
- Immerses students in text
- Engages children's interest
- Accepts appreciations
- Models thinking strategies

#### Postreading
- Uses context area strategies
- Uses processing strategies
- Integrates topic into curriculum
- Reinforces learning
- Models problem-solving
- Discusses problems
- Reinforces learning through review
- Integrates new knowledge into old
- Offers feedback
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Works alone</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Works in a group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Works with whole class</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks questions</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Seems engaged in reading task</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers questions thoughtfully</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans reading tasks</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitors own reading</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluates own reading</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>